PLATO

Phaedo

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Phaedo

57a ECHECRATES:[1] Were you with Socrates yourself, Phaedo, on the day he drank the poison in prison, or did you hear about it from someone else?

PHAEDO:[2] I was there myself, Echecrates.

ECHECRATES: So what did he say before his death? And how did he meet his end? I'd enjoy hearing about it, you see. For, as a matter of fact, scarcely any citizens of Phlius visit Athens these days, and no foreigner
57b who could give us a clear report about it has come from there for a long time. Other than that he died from drinking poison, that is. They couldn't tell us anything else.

58a PHAEDO: So haven't you even found out how the trial went?

ECHECRATES: Yes, someone did give us a report about that, and we really were surprised that evidently he died long after it had finished. So why was that, Phaedo?

PHAEDO: It was a matter of chance, Echecrates, in his case. For by chance on the day before his trial the stern of the ship the Athenians send to Delos had been wreathed.

ECHECRATES: What ship is that?

PHAEDO: It's the ship in which, according to the Athenians, Theseus
58b once set out to Crete with the famous 'twice seven', and both saved their lives and escaped with his own. Anyway, as the story goes, at that time they had vowed to Apollo that if they were saved, in return they would send an embassy to Delos every year. And this is the embassy they have

[1] Echecrates of Phlius, a member of the Pythagorean community at Phlius in the early to mid-fourth century.

[2] Phaedo of Elis, a Socratic philosopher of some note who wrote dialogues and founded his own school.

always sent the god each year from that time, and still do now. Well, once they have started the embassy they have a law that during that time the city should be kept pure, and so the people should put nobody to death, until the ship has reached Delos and come back to Athens again. But this sometimes takes a long time, if winds chance to hold them up. The 58c
embassy starts the moment the priest of Apollo wreaths the stern of the ship; and as chance would have it this had happened, as I said, on the day before the trial. It was for these reasons that Socrates had a long time in prison between his trial and his death.

ECHECRATES: What then about the details of his actual death, Phaedo? What was it that was said and done, and which of his friends were with him? Or would the officials not let them see him, so that he met his end without the company of loved ones?

PHAEDO: Not at all. Some of them were with him – many, in fact. 58d

ECHECRATES: Then do your best to give us the clearest report you can of all this, unless you happen to be busy.

PHAEDO: No, I'm not busy, and I'll try to describe it to you all. For remembering Socrates, both when I'm doing the talking and when I hear about him from someone else, is always the greatest pleasure of all for me.

ECHECRATES: The same goes for your audience, Phaedo. Try to go through every detail as accurately as you can.

PHAEDO: Of course. My own experiences when I was with him were 58e
surprising. For pity didn't enter me, as you might have expected, given that I was witnessing the death of a friend. The man seemed to me to be happy, Echecrates, both in his behaviour and in what he said, so fearlessly and nobly did he meet his end. So the thought came to me that even his going to Hades was not without divine benefaction, and also that when he arrived there he would fare well, if anyone ever did. For these reasons 59a
hardly any feeling of pity entered me, as you would expect of someone at a scene of misfortune; nor did I feel any pleasure that we were caught up in philosophy, as our custom had been – for in fact our conversation was a philosophical one. Instead I had a quite peculiar experience, an unusual mixture blended together from both the pleasure and the pain, as I took in the fact that his life was just about to end. Everyone present was pretty much in this state, sometimes laughing, but at other times in tears, and one of us particularly so, Apollodorus – I suppose you know the man and 59b
the way he behaves.

ECHECRATES: Yes, of course.

PHAEDO: Well, he was completely like that, and I myself was in turmoil, as the others were too.

ECHECRATES: Who in fact was there, Phaedo?

PHAEDO: Of the locals there was the Apollodorus I've mentioned, of course, and Critobulus and his father,[3] and then Hermogenes, Epigenes, Aeschines and Antisthenes. Ctesippus of the Paeanian deme was there as well, and Menexenus and some other locals. But Plato[4] was ill, I think.

ECHECRATES: Were any foreigners there?

59c PHAEDO: Yes: Simmias of Thebes, along with Cebes[5] and Phaedondes, and from Megara Euclides[6] and Terpsion.

ECHECRATES: What about Aristippus and Cleombrotus? Were they there?

PHAEDO: No, they weren't. They were said to be in Aegina.

ECHECRATES: And was anyone else there?

PHAEDO: I think these were pretty much all of them.

ECHECRATES: Well then, what discussions were there, can you tell me?

PHAEDO: I'll try to describe everything to you from the beginning.
59d You see, we'd been in the habit of visiting Socrates on a regular basis, particularly on the preceding days, both I and the others. We used to assemble from dawn at the court where the trial itself had been held, because it was near the prison. So each day we would wait around until the prison opened, passing the time with one another, as it didn't open early. But when it did open, we'd go in to see Socrates and usually spent the day with him. And on that occasion we'd assembled at an earlier
59e time, because as we left the prison the evening before, we found out that the ship had arrived from Delos. So we sent round a message to get to the usual place as early as possible. We arrived, and the door-keeper who usually let us in came out and told us to wait and not enter until

[3] Crito, Socrates' faithful old friend, and sole interlocutor in Plato's *Crito*.

[4] One of only three self-mentions by Plato in his dialogues. The other two are at *Apology* 34a and 38b, where he is named as being present at Socrates' trial.

[5] Simmias and Cebes, who turn out to be the principal interlocutors of the dialogue, were Thebans who had studied with the Pythagorean Philolaus as well as being members of Socrates' circle. Cebes, at least, lived until the mid-fourth century, and both are reported to have written philosophical dialogues.

[6] Euclides of Megara, Socratic philosopher and founder of the Megaric school of philosophy, which in turn exercised a strong influence on Stoicism. After Socrates' execution, Plato and other Socratics were said to have taken refuge with him at Megara.

he himself gave the word: 'The Eleven,'[7] he explained, 'are unchaining Socrates and giving orders for him to die today.' But it wasn't long before he came back and told us to go in. So in we went and, as we did so, we 60a found Socrates newly unchained, and Xanthippe[8] – you know her, of course – holding his child and sitting by his side. When Xanthippe saw us, she cried out and said just the sort of thing that women tend to say: 'Socrates, this is now the very last time that your friends will speak to you and you to them.' Socrates turned to Crito and said: 'Crito, someone had better take her home.'

Some of Crito's people started to take her away, crying and beating 60b herself in her grief. But Socrates, sitting up onto his couch, bent his leg and gave it a hard rub with his hand, and as he rubbed it he said: 'What a peculiar thing it seems to be, my friends, this thing that people call "pleasure". What a surprising natural relation it has to its apparent opposite, pain. I mean that the two of them refuse to come to a person at the same time, yet if someone chases one and catches it he is pretty much forced always to catch the other one too, as if they were two things but joined by a single head. And I do believe,' he said, 'that if Aesop 60c had reflected on them, he would have composed a fable: that they were at war, and that god wanted to reconcile them, and that, finding himself unable to do so, he joined their heads together, the result being that if one of them comes to somebody the other too will later follow in its train. That is precisely what seems to be happening to me too. Because pain was in my leg from the fetter, pleasure seems to have come in its train.'

Cebes took this up: 'Indeed, Socrates,' he said, 'thanks for reminding me. You know those poems you've been composing, your versifications 60d of Aesop's tales and the proem to Apollo? Well, some people were already asking me about them, and in particular Evenus[9] asked the day before yesterday what on earth your idea was in composing them when you came here, given that you had never composed poetry before. So if you care at all about my having an answer for Evenus when he asks me again – because I'm quite sure that he will ask – tell me what to say.'

'Well,' he said, 'tell him the truth, Cebes: that when I composed them it wasn't because I wanted to rival his expertise or that of his poems, which 60e

[7] The panel of officers, chosen by lot, who enforced the sentences decided in Athenian courts.
[8] Socrates' wife.
[9] Evenus of Paros, poet and rhetorician.

I knew was no easy task. No, there were some dreams whose meaning I was testing, and thus honouring a sacred obligation, just in case it might after all be this sort of music that they were ordering me to compose. Here is what they were like. The same dream has often visited me in my past life, appearing in different guises at different times, but saying the same things. "Socrates," it said, "compose music and work at it." In the past I used to suppose that it was encouraging me and cheering
61a me on to do what I *was* doing, like those who cheer runners. I took the dream to be cheering me on in the same way to do just what I was doing, composing music, on the grounds that philosophy is the greatest music, and that that was what I was doing. But now since the trial was over and the god's festival was holding up my death, I thought that just in case the dream might after all be instructing me to compose music as commonly understood, I should not disobey it but should start
61b composing. For it seemed safer not to depart before I had honoured my sacred obligation by composing poems in obedience to the dream. So that is how I came to start by making a composition dedicated to the god whose festival was currently being held. But, after I had attended to the god, I reflected that the poet, if he is to be a poet, should compose stories, not arguments. I myself was not a story-teller, so I took the stories I had ready to hand and knew, those of Aesop, and made compositions out of the ones that first came to mind. So, Cebes, tell all this to Evenus, give him my best wishes and tell him, if he is in his right mind, to come
61c after me as soon as possible. I leave, it seems, today: so the Athenians command.'

To which Simmias said: 'Fancy recommending a thing like that to Evenus, Socrates! I've often encountered him in the past, and from what I've seen I imagine there's no way that he will follow your advice willingly.'

'Really?' said he. 'Isn't Evenus a philosopher?'

'I think he is,' said Simmias.

'Then Evenus will be willing, as will everyone who has a worthy claim to this activity. Though perhaps he won't use violence on himself, for
61d they say that it isn't sanctioned.' As he was saying this he put his legs down on the ground, and spent the rest of the conversation sitting in that position.

Cebes then put a question to him. 'What do you mean by this, Socrates – that it isn't sanctioned to use violence on oneself, but that the philosopher would be willing to follow someone who is dying?'

'What, Cebes? Haven't you and Simmias heard about such things from your dealings with Philolaus?'[10]

'Nothing clear, at any rate, Socrates.'

'Well, I too speak about them from hearsay. I'll gladly tell you what I happen to have heard. Besides, it may be particularly appropriate for 61e
someone about to travel there to consider thoroughly and tell stories about what we think the stay there is like. For what else is there to do to fill the time until sunset?'

'Then why ever do they say that it isn't sanctioned to kill oneself, Socrates? For actually – going back to what you just asked – I did hear from Philolaus, while he was living with us, and in fact from some other people too, that one shouldn't do this. But as yet nobody has ever told me anything clear about these issues.'

'Still, you mustn't despair,' he said, 'because you may actually get to 62a
hear something clear. However, maybe it will seem surprising to you if this and nothing else is simple – if, that is, it never happens for humankind that, as in other matters, at certain times and for certain people it is better to be dead than alive; and as for those for whom it is better to be dead, maybe it seems surprising to you if it is impious for these people to benefit themselves, but they must wait for someone else to be their benefactor.'

Cebes chuckled at that. 'Zeus be my witness,' he said, speaking in his own dialect.

'Yes, and it would seem unreasonable,' said Socrates, 'at least when 62b
put like that. But still perhaps there really is something to be said for it. Now what is said in secret accounts about these matters, that we human beings are in a sort of prison[11] and that one must not release oneself from it or run away, that seems to me a weighty saying and one that is not easy to penetrate. But all the same, Cebes, this at least does strike me as well said, that it is gods who take care of us and that we human beings are one of the gods' possessions. Or do you not think so?'

'I do,' said Cebes.

'Well,' said he, 'supposing one of *your* possessions were to kill itself 62c
but you hadn't given a sign that you wanted it to die, wouldn't*[12] you be

[10] Philolaus of Croton (*c.* 470–*c.* 385 BC) was the major Pythagorean philosopher of the late fifth century. See further, n. 41 below.

[11] The Greek word translated 'prison' also means 'garrison'.

*[12] Reading οὔκουν at 62c1.

angry with it, and if you had some way of punishing it, wouldn't you do so?'

'Certainly,' he said.

'So perhaps in this way it isn't unreasonable that one should not kill oneself until god imposes some necessity, like the necessity now facing us.'

'Yes,' said Cebes, 'this, at least, seems plausible. On the other hand, what you were saying just now, that philosophers would be ready and
62d willing to die, that looks odd, Socrates, if in fact what we were saying just now is reasonable: both that it is god who takes care of us and that we are his possessions. For it is unreasonable that the wisest people shouldn't resent leaving this ministration, in which they are supervised by the best supervisors there are, namely gods. Because, I take it, such a person doesn't think that *he* will take better care of himself after he has become
62e free. An unintelligent person, however, might well think so, namely that he should try to escape from his master. He wouldn't reflect that he should not do so, from a good one at least, but rather should do his best to stay with him. Because of that he would try to escape without pausing to reflect. But someone with intelligence would surely desire always to be with his better. And yet put like this, Socrates, it's likely that the truth is the opposite of what was just said: it's fitting that the wise should resent dying, the foolish welcome it.'

63a When Socrates heard this he seemed to me delighted by Cebes' persistence, and he looked at us and said: 'As you can see, Cebes is always scrutinizing arguments, and refuses to be convinced straight away of whatever anyone says.'

Simmias said, 'Well, Socrates, this time, at least, I too think that there's something in what Cebes is saying. With what motive would truly wise men try to escape from masters better than themselves and give them up without a fight? And I think that Cebes is aiming his argument at you, because you are accepting without a fight your departure both from us and from those good rulers, as you yourself agree they are, the gods.'

63b 'What the two of you are saying is fair,' he said. 'I suppose you mean that I must defend myself in answer to these charges, as if in court.'

'That's quite right,' said Simmias.

'Very well then,' he said, 'let me attempt to defend myself more persuasively to you than I did to my jurors. Well, Simmias and Cebes,' he said,

'if I didn't think that I'll enter, firstly, the company of other gods, who are both wise and good, and secondly the company of humans who have died and who are better than the people here, then it would be wrong of me not to resent my death. As things stand, however, I assure you that I am 63c
hoping to join the company of good men. I wouldn't absolutely insist on this latter, but as for entering the company of gods who are entirely good masters, be sure that if there is anything of this sort that I *would* insist on it is on that. For these reasons I'm not as resentful as I'd otherwise be, but am optimistic that there is something in store for the dead and, as we have long been told, something much better for the good than for the bad.'

'Well then, Socrates,' said Simmias. 'Do you intend to depart keeping this thought to yourself, or would you share it with us too? I think after 63d
all that this is a good in which we too have an interest. And at the same time, should you convince us of what you're saying, it will serve you as that defence.'

'Of course, I'll try,' he said. 'But first let's deal with Crito here and see what it is that I think he's been wanting to say for quite some time.'

'Just this, Socrates,' said Crito. 'For some time the man who will give you the poison has been telling me that I must instruct you to keep the conversation as short as possible. He says this is because during conversation people get too hot, and one shouldn't combine any overheating with taking the poison. Otherwise, those who do so are sometimes forced 63e
to drink two or even three doses.'

'Never mind him,' said Socrates. 'Just let him make arrangements for giving two doses, or even three, if need be.'

'Well, I pretty much knew you'd say this,' said Crito, 'but he's been pestering me for some time.'

'Don't mind him,' he said. 'But to *you*, my jurors, I want now to give the account I owe you, of how it seems to me to be reasonable for a man who has genuinely spent his life in philosophy to be confident about his imminent death, and to be optimistic that he'll win the greatest goods 64a
there, after he's met his end. So I'll try to explain, Simmias and Cebes, how this could be the case.

'Well, other people have probably not realized that the sole pursuit of those who correctly engage in philosophy is dying and being dead. If this is true, it would surely be absurd for death to be their sole aim throughout

their life, but, when it actually arrives, for them to resent that which has long been their aim and pursuit.'

64b Simmias laughed at that. 'Indeed, Socrates,' he said, 'I was in absolutely no mood for laughing just then, but you made me do so. I think that most people, on hearing this point, would think it altogether well said about those who pursue philosophy – and people back home would agree entirely – that those who pursue philosophy really are near death,[13] and that they themselves have realized that death is just what these people deserve.'

'Yes, and they'd be telling the truth, Simmias, except when they say that they've realized it – because they haven't realized the *sense* in which true philosophers are near death, the sense in which they deserve death,

64c and what that death is like. Let's speak,' he said, 'among ourselves and ignore them. Do we believe that there is such a thing as death?'

'Certainly,' replied Simmias.

'Can we believe that it is anything other than the separation of the soul from the body? And do we believe that being dead is the following: the body has been separated from the soul and come to be apart, alone by itself, and the soul has been separated from the body and is apart, alone by itself. Can death be anything other than that?'

'No, that's what it is,' he said.

64d 'Consider then, my friend, if you too turn out to think what I do. I believe that the following points will give us a better understanding of the things we are looking into. Does it seem to you in character for a philosophical man to be eager for such so-called pleasures as those of food and drink?'

'No, not at all, Socrates,' said Simmias.

'How about those of sex?'

'By no means.'

'What about the other sorts of attention given to the body? Do you think someone like that holds them in high regard? Take, for example, acquiring superior clothing and shoes and the other ways of adorning the

64e body: do you think he values them, or attaches no value to them except in so far as he absolutely must take an interest in them?'

'No value, I think,' he said, 'at least if he's truly a philosopher.'

[13] The verb translated here and in the next paragraph as 'be near death' could also mean 'want to die'. But there is no such ambiguity at 65a6, where Socrates says that, according to most people, philosophers come 'pretty close to being dead'.

'In short, then, do you think,' he said, 'that such a man's concern is not for the body, and that, as far as he can, he stands apart from it and is turned towards his soul?'

'Yes, I do.'

'So first of all is it clear that in matters like these the philosopher releases his soul as much as possible from its association with the body, he above all other people?' 65a

'So it seems.'

'And ordinary people think, don't they, Simmias, that life isn't worth living for someone who finds nothing of that kind pleasant, and who takes no interest in bodily things. They think that he who gives no thought to the pleasures which come via the body is pretty close to being dead.'

'Yes, what you say is quite true.'

'What about the acquisition of wisdom itself? Is the body an impediment or not if one recruits it as a partner in one's inquiry? I mean something like this: do both sight and hearing offer people any truth? Or are even the poets always telling us this sort of mantra, that nothing we hear or see is accurate? And yet if these particular bodily senses are not accurate or clear, then the *others* will hardly be, because, I assume, they are all inferior to them. Don't you think so?' 65b

'Certainly.'

'So,' he said, 'when does the soul grasp the truth? Because whenever it attempts to examine something together with the body, clearly at those times it is thoroughly deceived by the body.'

'That is true.' 65c

'Then isn't it in reasoning – if anywhere – that the soul discovers something real?'

'Yes.'

'Right, and surely it reasons best when it is being troubled neither by hearing nor by sight nor by pain, nor by a certain sort of pleasure either, but when it as much as possible comes to be alone by itself, ignoring the body, and, as far as it can, doesn't associate or have contact with the body when reaching out to what is real.'

'That's true.'

'So here too does the philosopher's soul particularly devalue the body and try to escape from it, seeking instead to become alone by itself?' 65d

'So it seems.'

'And now what about things like the following, Simmias? Do we say that there is a Just itself or not?'

'Indeed we do!'

'Yes, and a Beautiful and a Good?'

'Of course.'

'Now have you ever actually seen with your eyes any of the things of this kind?'

'Not at all,' he said.

'Or have you grasped them with one of the other senses that operate through the body? I am talking about all of them, such as Largeness, Health, Strength[14] and, to sum up, about the being[15] of all the rest – what
65e each of them really is. Are they viewed at their truest through the body, or is the following rather the case: that whichever of us trains himself most, and with the greatest precision, to think about each thing investigated as an object in its own right, *he* would come closest to knowing each of them?'

'Certainly.'

'So wouldn't the man who did this most purely be one who so far as possible used his thought in its own right to access each reality, neither
66a adducing the evidence of his sight in his thinking nor bringing any other sense at all along with his reasoning, but using his thought alone by itself and unalloyed, and so attempting to hunt down each real thing alone by itself and unalloyed, separated as far as possible from eyes and ears and virtually from his entire body, for the reason that the body disturbs his soul and, whenever it associates with it, doesn't let it acquire truth and wisdom? Isn't this, Simmias, the man who will hit upon reality, if anyone will?'

'That's eminently true, Socrates,' said Simmias.

66b 'Then given all this,' he said, 'is it inevitable for those who are genuinely philosophers to be struck by the following sort of belief, so that they also tell one another things like this: "You know, a sort of short cut may well be taking us with our reason towards the quarry in our inquiry, because as long as we have the body and our soul is fused with bodily evil, we'll *never* properly acquire what we desire, namely, as we would say, the truth.
66c For the body detains us in countless ways because of the sustenance it

[14] For this trio see also *Meno* 72d–e, a passage which suggests that they, unlike the preceding trio, are Forms that are already well understood and can therefore provide a model for investigating the Forms of values.

[15] See p. 3 n. 6.

needs. Besides, should certain diseases attack it, they impede our hunt for reality. The body fills us up with loves, desires, fears and fantasies of every kind, and a great deal of nonsense, with the result that it really and truly, as the saying goes, makes it impossible for us even to think about anything at any moment. For it is nothing but the body and its desires that causes wars, uprisings and conflicts. All wars arise for the sake of acquiring property, and we are compelled to acquire property on account 66d
of the body, enslaved as we are to its maintenance. It is thanks to the body that, for all these reasons, we have no time for philosophy. Though the worst of all is that even if we do get some respite from the body and turn to pursuing some inquiry, in our investigations it yet again turns up everywhere, causes confusion and turmoil, and overwhelms us, so as to prevent us from being able to keep the truth in sight. But we really have shown that if we are ever to have pure knowledge of something, we must be separated from the body and view things by themselves with the soul 66e
by itself. The time when we will have that which we desire and whose lovers we claim to be, namely wisdom, will be when we are dead, as the argument indicates, and not while we are alive. For if it is impossible to have pure knowledge of anything when we are in the company of the body, then either knowledge cannot be acquired anywhere, or it can be acquired when we are dead. For then the soul will be alone by itself, 67a
apart from the body, whereas before then it will not. And in the time when we are alive, it seems that we will be closest to knowledge if, so far as possible, we have no dealings with the body and do not associate with it except when absolutely necessary, and are not infected with its nature, but instead keep pure from it, until the god himself releases us. If we stay pure in this way by being separated from the body's folly, in all likelihood we will be with people[16] of this kind, and will know through our very selves everything that is unalloyed, which is, equally, the truth. For it may 67b
be that it is not sanctioned for someone impure to grasp something pure." I think these are the sort of things, Simmias, that all those who truly love learning must tell one another and believe. Or do you not think so?'

'I do, more than anything.'

'Then,' said Socrates, 'if all this is true, my friend, for someone who reaches the place to which I am journeying there is every hope that there, if anywhere, he will properly acquire that for the sake of which we have

[16] The Greek could also mean 'with *things* of this kind' (that is, with pure things).

67c worked hard in our past life. Hence the travel now assigned to me comes with good hope, as it does for any other man who considers his thought to have been purified, as it were, and so readied.'

'Certainly,' said Simmias.

'And doesn't purification turn out to be the very thing we were recently talking about in our discussion,[17] namely parting the soul from the body as much as possible and habituating it to assembling and gathering itself from every part of the body, alone by itself, and to living alone by itself as
67d far as it can, both now and afterwards, released from the body as if from fetters?'

'Certainly,' he said.

'So is it *this* that is named "death": release and parting of soul from body?'

'Yes, entirely so,' he said.

'Right, and according to us it is those who really love wisdom[18] who are always particularly eager – or rather, who *alone* are always eager – to release it, and philosophers' practice is just that, release and parting of soul from body. Or isn't it?'

'It seems to be.'

'So, just as I was saying at the beginning,[19] wouldn't it be laughable
67e for a man to be as close as possible to dead, and so to train himself to live like that, but then, when death comes to him, to resent it?'

'It would be laughable, of course.'

'In that case, Simmias,' he said, 'those who truly love wisdom are in reality practising dying, and being dead is least fearful to them of all people. Consider it in the following way. If they are at odds with the body in every respect, and desire to have the soul alone by itself, but were afraid and resentful when this actually happened, wouldn't that be extremely
68a irrational – if, that is, they did not go cheerfully to the place where, on their arrival, they hope to attain that with which they were in love throughout life, namely wisdom, and to be separated from the company of that with which they were at odds? When human boyfriends, wives and sons have died, very many people have readily consented to go after them into Hades, led by the hope that there they will see the people they

[17] At 64d–66a.

[18] *Philosophountes*, that is, those who are philosophers (*philosophoi*), which literally means 'lovers of wisdom'. The translation will vary between 'philosopher(s)' and 'lover(s) of wisdom'.

[19] At 64a.

longed for and be with them. Yet will someone who is genuinely in love with wisdom, and has strongly conceived this same hope that nowhere but in Hades will he have a worthwhile encounter with it, resent dying 68b
and go there less than cheerfully? One can only think he will not, at least if he is *really* a lover of wisdom, my friend. For he will be quite sure that he will have a pure encounter with wisdom nowhere else but there. And if this is so, as I was just saying,[20] wouldn't it be extremely irrational if someone like that were to fear death?'

'Extremely irrational, indeed.'

'Then' he said, 'if you see that a man is resentful that he is about to die, is that sufficient proof for you that he was not a lover of wisdom but 68c
a sort of body-lover? And this same man, I take it, is also a money-lover and honour-lover, either one of these or both.'

'It's entirely as you say,' he said.

'So, Simmias,' he said, 'doesn't that which is called "courage" also belong most to those with this attitude?'

'Quite so,' he said.

'And temperance as well – that which even ordinary people call "temperance", namely not being in a flutter about one's desires, but rather being disdainful towards them and staying composed – doesn't that belong only to those who particularly disdain the body and live in philosophy?'

'It must,' he said. 68d

'Right,' he said, 'because if you care to think about other people's courage and temperance, you'll find these to be absurd.'

'How so, Socrates?'

'Are you aware,' he said, 'that all those other people consider death to be one of the great evils?'

'Very much so,' he said.

'Then is it fear of greater evils that makes the brave among them endure death, whenever they do so?'

'That's right.'

'In that case it is being afraid and fear that make everyone except philosophers courageous. And yet it is unreasonable, to say the least, that fear and cowardice should make someone courageous.'

'Certainly.' 68e

[20] At 67e.

'What about those among them who keep their composure? Hasn't this same thing happened to them – it is a sort of intemperance that makes them temperate? And yet, although we *say* that it is impossible, all the same in their case what *happens* concerning that simple-minded temperance turns out to be like this: because they fear being denied other pleasures, which they desire, they abstain from one set of pleasures because they are overcome by another set of pleasures. Yet although they
69a *call* being ruled by their pleasures "intemperance", what actually happens is that they overcome some pleasures because they are overcome by other pleasures. And this resembles what we were just talking about – that it is in a way because of intemperance that they have become temperate.'

'Yes, it is similar.'

'For I suspect, my good Simmias, that for the purpose of virtue this is not the correct exchange, the exchanging of pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains and fear for fear, greater for less, like currencies, but that just one thing is the correct currency, in return for which one must
69b exchange all these: I mean wisdom. Now when all things are bought and sold for this and with this – with wisdom – they really are, I suspect, courage, temperance, justice and in sum true virtue, regardless of whether pleasures, fears and everything else like that are added or removed. But when they are kept apart from wisdom and exchanged for one another, that sort of virtue is, I fear, a kind of illusion: it is really fit for slaves, and
69c contains nothing sound or true. The reality is, I suspect, that temperance, justice and courage are a kind of purification from everything like this, and that wisdom itself is a kind of rite to purify us. So it actually seems that those people who established the rites for us are no ordinary people, but in reality have long been setting a riddle when they say that whoever comes to Hades without initiation and the rites will lie in filth, whereas someone who arrives there purified and initiated will dwell with gods. For
69d in fact, as those involved in the rites put it, "many carry the fennel-wand, but few are inspired". The latter, in my opinion, are none other than those who have pursued philosophy correctly. In trying to become one of them I left nothing undone in my life, at least as far as I could, but did my utmost in every way. Whether I did so correctly and achieved anything, I'll know for certain when I've got there, god willing, and I don't think it will be long. This, then,' he said, 'Simmias and Cebes, is what I say in my defence to show that it is reasonable for me not to be upset or resentful

at leaving you and my masters here, as I believe that there too, no less 69e
than here, I'll meet good masters and companions. So if you find me any
more persuasive in my defence than the Athenians' jury did, that would
be welcome.'

When Socrates had said this, Cebes took up the conversation and
said: 'Socrates, I approve of the other things you say, but the matter 70a
of the soul causes people to have strong doubts and to worry that once
separated from the body it no longer exists anywhere, but is destroyed
and perishes on the day when the human being dies, immediately as it is
being separated from the body, and that as it comes out it is dissipated like
breath or smoke, flies away in all directions, and isn't anything anywhere.
For if it really *did* exist somewhere alone by itself, gathered together and
separated from these evils you just described, then there would be much 70b
hope, and a noble hope at that, Socrates, that what you say is true. But
this very point doubtless requires no little reassurance and proof, that
the soul exists when the human being has died, and has some power and
wisdom.'

'What you say is true, Cebes,' said Socrates. 'But what shall we do?
Would you like us to spend our conversation on these very questions, and
discuss whether or not it's likely to be so?'

'For my part,' said Cebes, 'I'd be glad to hear your view about them.'

'Anyhow, I really don't think,' said Socrates, 'that anyone who heard 70c
us now, even if he were a comic poet,[21] would say that I'm prattling on
and talking about irrelevant things. If that's the decision, then, we should
consider it thoroughly.

'Let's consider it in the following sort of way. Let's see whether or
not it turns out that when people have died their souls exist in Hades.
Now there is an ancient saying which comes to mind, that souls exist
there when they have come from here, and that they come back here and
come to be[22] from dead people. If this is so – that living people come
to be again from those who have died – surely our souls would exist 70d
there? For, I take it, the souls would not come to be again, if they did not
exist. And so it would be evidence enough of the truth of this, should it

[21] A reference to Aristophanes, who in *Clouds* 1485 describes Socrates and Socrates' students as 'prattlers'.

[22] That is, come to be the souls of living people. The verb translated as 'come to be' can also mean 'be born', and it is translated as such during the Recollection argument (73a–77a). But in this passage, as in 77c–d, Socrates is arguing from a general principle about how things *come to be* F.

really come to be clear that living people come to be from nowhere other than from the dead. But if this is not true, we would need some other argument.'

'Quite so,' said Cebes.

'Well then,' he said, 'if you want to understand more easily, don't consider this with regard to humans only, but in relation to all animals and plants too. In short, concerning everything that has a coming-to-be,
70e let us see whether they all come to be in this way: the opposites from nowhere other than their opposites – all those, that is, that actually have an opposite, as for example the beautiful is surely opposite to the ugly, and just to unjust, and there are countless others like this. So let's consider whether everything that has an opposite necessarily comes to be from nowhere other than from its opposite. For example, whenever something comes to be larger, I presume that it is necessarily from being smaller before that the thing later comes to be larger?'

'Yes.'

71a 'Also, if it comes to be smaller, is it from being larger before that it will later come to be smaller?'

'That's so,' he said.

'Again, is it from being stronger that the weaker comes to be, and from slower the faster?'

'Certainly.'

'Well, if something comes to be worse, won't it do so from better, and if more just, from more unjust?'

'Of course.'

'So,' he said, 'we have a satisfactory grasp of this: all opposite things come to be in this way, from opposites?'

'Certainly.'

'Next, is there something of the following kind too found in them? Between all the pairs of opposites – two in each case – are there two pro-
71b cesses of coming-to-be, from the first to the second and conversely from the second to the first? Between a thing when greater and smaller are there increase and decrease, and do we accordingly call the one "increasing", the other "decreasing"?'

'Yes,' he said.

'And again "detaching" and "combining", "cooling" and "heating", and so on. Even if we don't use names for them in some cases, still in point of fact mustn't the following be true in every case, namely that they

come to be from one another and that there is a process of coming-to-be of each into the other?'

'Yes indeed,' he said.

'Very well,' he said. 'Is there an opposite to living, as sleeping is to 71c
being awake?'

'There certainly is,' he said.

'What is it?'

'Being dead,' he said.

'Then do these come to be from one another, given that they are opposites,[23] and are the processes of coming-to-be between them two in number, as they themselves are two?'

'Of course.'

'Well then,' said Socrates, 'I'll tell you one of the pairs I just mentioned, both the pair itself and its processes of coming-to-be, and you tell me the other pair. I call one thing "being asleep", another "being awake", and say that it is from being asleep that being awake comes to be, and from 71d
being awake being asleep, and that their processes of coming-to-be are falling asleep and waking up. Does that satisfy you,' he said, 'or not?'

'Certainly.'

'Now *you* tell me,' he said, 'about life and death in the same way. Don't you say that being dead is the opposite of being alive?'

'I do.'

'And that they come to be from one another?'

'Yes.'

'So what is it that comes to be from that which is living?'

'That which is dead,' he said.

'And what,' he said, 'from that which is dead?'

'I must grant,' he said, 'that it's that which is living.'

'In that case, Cebes, is it from those that are dead that both living things and living people come to be?'

'It appears so,' he said. 71e

'Then our souls exist in Hades,' he said.

'So it seems.'

'Now as for their two processes of coming-to-be, is there one, at any rate, that is in fact unmistakable? I mean dying is unmistakable, isn't it?'

'Certainly,' said Cebes.

[23] The translation '*if* they are opposites' is also possible.

'So what will we do?' said Socrates. 'Will we refuse to balance it with the opposite process of coming-to-be, and instead will nature be handicapped in this respect? Or must we balance dying with an opposite process of coming-to-be?'

'I suppose we must,' he said.

'And what will this be?'

'Returning to life.'

'So,' he said, 'if there is such a thing as returning to life, would this
72a – returning to life – be a process of coming-to-be from dead people to living ones?'

'Certainly.'

'In that case, we agree in this way too that living people have come to be from the dead no less than dead people from the living. And we thought, I take it, that if this were true there would be sufficient evidence that the souls of the dead must exist somewhere, and that it is from there that they come to be again.'

'Given what we agreed, Socrates,' he said, 'I think this must be so.'

'Well then, Cebes,' he said, 'here is a way for you to see that we aren't wrong in what we have agreed, or so I think. Suppose the one set of
72b things did not always balance the other by coming to be, going round in a circle, as it were, but instead the process of coming-to-be were a straight line from the one to its opposite only, and did not bend back again to the former or turn in its course. Do you realize that then everything in the end would have the same form, be in the same condition, and stop coming to be?'

'What do you mean?' said Cebes.

'It's not hard,' said Socrates, 'to get an idea of what I'm talking about. For example, if there were falling asleep, but waking up did not balance it
72c by coming to be from the sleeping, do you realize that the eventual state of things would make Endymion[24] look insignificant: he would go quite unnoticed, because everything else too would have fallen into the same condition as his – sleeping. Also, if everything underwent combining, but not detaching, soon Anaxagoras' saying would have come true: "all things together".[25] In the same way too, my dear Cebes, if everything that

[24] In Greek myth, an outstandingly beautiful youth who was kept that way by being given eternal sleep.

[25] The treatise of Anaxagoras of Clazomenae (*c.* 500–428 BC; see further at 97b–99c) began 'All things were together.'

partook in living were to die, and if, when they had died, the dead were to remain in that form and not return to life, wouldn't it be absolutely unavoidable for everything in the end to be dead and nothing alive? For 72d
if living things came to be from the other things, and if the living things died, how could they be prevented from all being expended and ending up dead?'

'I think that would be inevitable, Socrates,' said Cebes, 'and in my opinion what you're saying is completely true.'

'Yes, Cebes,' he said, 'I think that is exactly how it is. And we're not deluded in agreeing to this precise account, but these are all facts: coming back to life, living people coming to be from the dead, the souls of the dead existing, and its being better for good souls and worse for bad ones.'[26]

'Besides, Socrates,' replied Cebes, 'also according to that theory which 72e
you yourself habitually propound, that our learning is in fact nothing but recollection, according to it too, if it's true, we must presumably have learned in some previous time what we recollect now. And that would be 73a
impossible if our soul did not exist somewhere before it was born in this human form. So in this way too the soul seems to be something immortal.'

'But Cebes,' Simmias replied, 'what are the proofs for this? Remind me, because I don't quite remember at the moment.'

'It's shown,' said Cebes, 'by one particularly fine argument: when people are questioned, provided someone questions them well, they themselves come up with true statements about everything. And yet they wouldn't be able to do so, if knowledge and a correct account were not actually inside them. For example, if one confronts them with diagrams 73b
or something else of the kind, that is the situation in which one shows most clearly that this is the case.'[27]

'And if you aren't convinced in this way, Simmias,' said Socrates, 'see if you agree when you examine the issue along the following lines. For are you in doubt about how so-called "learning" can be recollection?'

'No, I don't doubt it,' said Simmias, 'but I need to undergo the very thing that the theory is about: recollecting. And to *some* extent I already remember and am convinced, thanks to what Cebes started to say. None

[26] The words translated 'and its being better for good souls and worse for bad ones', although present in the manuscripts, are omitted from most modern editions as an insertion from 63c6–7. But if they are retained, each of the three stages of the Cyclical Argument (71e, 72a, 72d) concludes with a differently worded vindication of the Hades tradition, which at 70c–d the argument set out to prove.

[27] A clear reference to *Meno* 81a–86c.

the less, I'd like to hear now how you yourself were starting to propound it.'

73c 'It was as follows,' he said. 'We agree, I take it, that if someone is going to recollect something, he must know it at some earlier time.'

'Certainly.'

'Now do we also agree that whenever knowledge comes in the following sort of way, it is recollection? What way do I mean? I'll tell you. Suppose someone sees or hears or has some other perception of one thing, and not only recognizes that thing, but also comes to think of something else which is the object not of the same knowledge but of a different one: aren't we right to say that he recollected this second thing, the one of
73d which he had the thought?'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean things of this kind: knowledge of a person is, I suppose, different from knowledge of a lyre?'

'Of course.'

'Now are you aware that whenever lovers see a lyre or cloak or something else that their boyfriends use regularly, they have the following experience: don't they both recognize the lyre, and come to have in their thinking the appearance of the boy whose lyre it is? This is recollection. Exactly, in fact, as someone upon seeing Simmias often recollects Cebes – and I imagine there'd be countless other cases of this kind.'

'Countless indeed,' said Simmias.

73e 'Well then,' he said, 'is that sort of thing a kind of recollection? And above all whenever someone has undergone this experience concerning things which he had by now forgotten because of the length of time in which he has not turned his mind to them?'

'Certainly,' he said.

'Very well,' said he. 'Can it happen that upon seeing a painting of a horse or lyre one recollects a person; and upon seeing a painting of Simmias one recollects Cebes?'

'Yes indeed.'

'And also that upon seeing a painting of Simmias one recollects Simmias himself?'

74a 'That certainly can happen,' he said.

'So, in view of all these, doesn't it follow that recollection happens from similar things, but happens from dissimilar things too?'

'Yes, it does follow.'

'But whenever it is from *similar* things that one recollects something, is it not true that one inevitably has the following experience as well: that of thinking whether or not in its similarity it in some way falls short of the thing one has recollected?'

'Yes, inevitably,' he said.

'Consider then,' said he, 'if this is the case. We say, I take it, that there is an Equal – I don't mean a stick equal to another stick, or a stone equal to a stone, or anything else of the kind, but something else besides all these, the Equal itself. Should we say that there is such a thing or not?'

'Indeed we should,' said Simmias, 'emphatically so!' 74b

'Do we also know what it is?'

'Certainly,' he said.

'Having got the knowledge of it from where? Wasn't it from the things we were just mentioning? Upon seeing that either sticks or stones or some other things were equal, wasn't it from them that we came to think of it, different as it is from them? Or doesn't it appear different to you? Consider it in this way as well. Don't equal stones and sticks sometimes, despite being the same ones, appear at one time equal, at another not?'[28]

'Certainly.'

'Well, have the Equals themselves ever appeared to you unequal, or 74c
has equality ever appeared as inequality?'

'No, not yet at any rate, Socrates.'

'In that case,' he said, 'these equal things and the Equal itself are not the same thing.'

'Not at all, Socrates, by the look of things.'

'But still,' he said, 'it's from these equal things, though they are different from that Equal, that you have nonetheless thought of and got the knowledge of it?'

'Very true,' said Simmias.

'Now it is either similar to them or dissimilar, isn't it?'

'Certainly.'

[28] An alternative manuscript tradition, followed by many editors and translators, gives 'Don't equal stones and sticks sometimes, despite being the same, appear equal to one, but not to another?' Those who render it this way are divided as to whether 'to one . . . to another' refers to people, and is to be construed with 'appear', or to stones and sticks, and is to be construed with 'equal'. For defence of the reading followed here see David Sedley, 'Equal sticks and stones' in D. Scott (ed.), *Maieusis: Essays in Ancient Philosophy in Honour of Myles Burnyeat* (Oxford, 2007), 68–86. Cf. also p. xxx.

'Yes, but it makes no difference,' he said. 'So long as upon seeing one
74d thing you come from this sight to think of something else, whether similar or dissimilar, it must,' he said, 'have been recollection.'

'Quite so.'

'Well then,' he said, 'do we experience something like the following as regards what happens in the case of sticks and, more generally, the equal things we just mentioned? Do they seem to us to be equal in the same manner as what Equal itself is? Alternatively, do they in some way fall short of it when it comes to being like the Equal? Or in no way?'

'They fall *far* short,' said Simmias.

'Now do we agree that whenever someone, upon seeing something,
74e thinks "What I am now seeing wants to be like some other real thing, but falls short and can't be like it, and instead is inferior", the person who thinks this must presumably have actually known beforehand the thing he says it resembles but falls short of?'

'Yes, he must.'

'Very well. Have we too experienced something like that, or not, concerning equal things and the Equal itself?'

'Definitely.'

75a 'In that case, we must have known the Equal before the time when we first, upon seeing equal things, came to think: "All these are seeking to be like the Equal, but fall short of it."'

'That's true.'

'Now we also agree that we haven't come to think of it, and indeed can't come to think of it, from anywhere other than from seeing or touching or from some other sense – I count them all as the same.'

'Yes, because they are the same, Socrates, at least in relation to what the argument aims to show.'

'Now then, it is from the senses that one must come to think that
75b everything in the reach of the senses both seeks that thing which Equal is and falls short of it. What do we say?'

'Just that.'

'Then before we started to see and hear and use the other senses, presumably we must in fact have got knowledge of what the Equal itself is, if we were going to refer to it the equal things deriving from the senses, saying they all are eager to be like it, but are inferior to it.'

'Necessarily, given what has already been said, Socrates.'

'Now was it from the moment we were born that we started seeing and hearing and having use of the other senses?'

'Certainly.'

'Right, and we must, as we're saying, have got the knowledge of the 75c
Equal before these?'

'Yes.'

'In that case, it seems we must have got it before we were born.'

'Yes, so it seems.'

'Now if having got it before we were born, we were born with it in our grasp, did we know both before birth and from the moment we were born not only the Equal, the Larger, and the Smaller, but also the entire set of such things? For our present argument is no more about the Equal than about the Beautiful itself, the Good itself, the Just, the Pious, and, 75d
as I've been saying, about everything to which we attach this label, "what such and such is",[29] both when asking our questions and when giving our answers. So we must have got the knowledge of each of these before we were born.'

'That's true.'

'And if after getting it we have not forgotten them each time, we must always be born knowing and must know at all times throughout our life. For this is knowing: having got knowledge of something, to hold it in one's grasp and not have lost it. Or isn't it loss of knowledge that we call forgetting, Simmias?'

'Certainly, Socrates,' he said. 75e

'On the other hand, I think, if having got it before birth we lost it in the course of being born, but later by using our senses we started regaining those items of knowledge about them which at an earlier time we had in our grasp, wouldn't what we call "learning" be regaining our own knowledge? And surely we'd be right to call this "recollecting"?'

'Definitely.'

'Right, because this was shown to be possible: upon perceiving some- 76a
thing – whether by seeing or hearing, or by getting some other perception of it – thanks to it, to come to think of something else which one had forgotten, something with which the first thing, though dissimilar, had a connection, or something to which it was similar. And so, just as I've

[29] For this and similar locutions for Forms, compare 65d–e, 74d, 75b, 78d, 92e; *Symposium* 211c–d; *Republic* 490b, 507b, 532a–b.

been saying, one of these two must be true: either all of us have been born knowing them and have lifelong knowledge of them, or the people we describe as "learning" simply recollect at a later stage, and learning would be recollection.'

'Exactly so, Socrates.'

'Which then do you choose, Simmias? That we have been born know-
76b ing, or that we recollect later the things we had got knowledge of before?'

'Right now, Socrates, I'm unable to choose between them.'

'Well can you make *this* choice, and what do you think about it? If a man has knowledge, could he or couldn't he give an account of what he knows?'

'He must be able to, Socrates,' he said.

'And do you really think that everyone can give an account of the things we just mentioned?'

'I'd certainly like that to be true,' said Simmias. 'But I'm far more afraid that this time tomorrow there will no longer be a single human being who can do this properly.'

76c 'In that case, Simmias,' he said, 'you don't think that everyone *knows* them.'

'Not at all.'

'Do they then recollect what they once learned?'

'Necessarily.'

'And when did our souls get the knowledge of them? It wasn't of course after we were born as human beings.'

'Certainly not.'

'Then it was earlier.'

'Yes.'

'In that case, Simmias, our souls existed earlier as well, separate from bodies, before they were in human form, and they had wisdom.'

'Unless, perhaps, we get these items of knowledge at the time when we are being born, Socrates – that time is still left.'

76d 'Well, my friend, in what other time do we lose them? Because of course we are not born with them in our grasp, as we just agreed. Or do we lose them at the very time when we get them? Or can you tell me some other time?'

'Not at all, Socrates – I didn't notice that there was nothing in what I was saying.'

'So is this how the facts stand for us, Simmias?' he said. 'If the things which are our constant refrain really exist, I mean a Beautiful and a Good and all that sort of being, and if we refer to this being everything derived from our senses, rediscovering our ownership of what belonged to us 76e
before, and compare them to it, then just as *these* things exist, so too must our soul also exist even before we are born. But if they don't exist, then wouldn't this argument turn out to have been propounded to no effect? Is that right, and is it equally necessary that they exist and that our souls existed before *we* were born, and if the former is not necessary, then the latter is not either?'[30]

'I'm extremely sure, Socrates,' said Simmias, 'that there is the same necessity, and it is to our advantage that the argument resorts to the point 77a
that it is as certain that our soul existed before our birth as that the being you mention now exists. For I have nothing that is as clear to me as that there exists, as much as anything could exist, everything of this sort, Beautiful, Good and all the other things you just mentioned. And at least in my opinion it has been sufficiently proved.'

'But what about Cebes?' said Socrates. 'We must of course convince Cebes too.'

'It's been proved sufficiently for him,' said Simmias, 'at least in my view, though he's more resolute than anyone in not believing arguments. All the same, I imagine he's been fully convinced that our soul existed before we were born. But whether it will still exist when we've died as 77b
well, that doesn't seem, even to me, to have been proved, Socrates,' he said. 'What Cebes recently said[31] still stands in our way, the common fear that at the time when the human being dies his or her soul is dissipated and this is the end of its existence. For why shouldn't it be that, on the one hand, the soul is born and constituted from somewhere else, and exists before it ever enters a human body, but that, on the other hand, when the soul has entered a body, and is being separated from it, it itself then dies and is destroyed?'

'Well said, Simmias,' said Cebes. 'For it appears that half of what is 77c
needed has been proved, namely that our soul existed before our birth.

[30] The Greek here more literally means 'and if not the one, not the other either'. This is usually expanded into 'And if the former do not exist, the latter did not either', but our expansion into 'if the former is not necessary, then the latter is not either' seems required by the logic of the passage.

[31] At 70a.

We must also prove that when we have died it will exist no less than it did before our birth, if the proof is to be complete.'

'It has already been shown, Simmias and Cebes,' said Socrates, 'if you're prepared to combine this argument with the one we agreed to before it – that everything living comes to be from what is dead. For if
77d the soul exists before as well, and if, when it enters upon living and comes to be, it must do so from nowhere other than from death and from being dead, surely it must exist also when it has died, simply because it has to come to be again?

'So what you both mention has been proved already. But none the less I think that both you and Simmias would gladly persevere with this argument too even more thoroughly, and that you fear what children fear – namely that what really happens is that when the soul leaves the
77e body the wind blows it apart and dissipates it, especially when someone happens to die not in calm weather but in a strong wind.'

Cebes laughed at that. 'Try to convince us, Socrates,' he said, 'as if we do have that fear. Or rather, not as if *we* have the fear – maybe there's a child actually inside us who's afraid of things like that. So try to convince that child to stop fearing death as if it were the bogeyman.'

'Well,' said Socrates, 'you must chant spells to him every day until you manage to chant it away.'

78a 'Where then, Socrates,' he said, 'will we find a good enchanter for such things, given that you,' he added, 'are leaving us?'

'Greece is a large place, Cebes,' he said, 'and there are no doubt good men in it. There are also many races of foreigners. All of these people you must comb in your search for such an enchanter, sparing neither money nor effort, as there's nothing on which you'd be better off spending money. But you must yourselves work together as you search, because you may not easily find others more able to do this than you.'

78b 'Yes, that will be done,' said Cebes. 'But let's return to where we left off, if that's to your liking.'

'It certainly is. How wouldn't it be?'

'Excellent,' he said.

'Well then,' said Socrates, 'should we ask ourselves a question along the following lines? What kind of thing is liable to undergo this – that is, to be dissipated? What kind of thing, I mean, is such that we should fear that it will be dissipated, and what kind of thing is not like that? And

should we then consider to which of the two kinds soul belongs, and on that basis be confident or fearful on behalf of our own soul?'

'You're right,' he said.

'Now is it correct to say that what has been put together and is naturally 78c
composite is the sort to be divided in the respect in which it was put together; and, on the other hand, that if something is actually incomposite, then it alone (if anything is) is the sort to escape division?'

'Yes, I think that's so,' said Cebes.

'Now isn't it true that the things that are always in the same state and condition are most likely to be the incomposite ones, whereas those that are in different conditions at different times and are never in the same state are most likely to be composite?'

'I think so.'

'Then let's turn,' he said, 'to the same things as in the previous argument. Take the essential being which is the object of our account 78d
when in our questions and answers we explain *what it is*. Does it always stay in the same condition and state, or is it in different conditions at different times? The Equal itself, the Beautiful itself, what each thing itself is, that which really is – is that ever subject to change of any kind at all? Or does *what each of them is* always stay in the same condition and state, uniform and alone by itself, and never in any respect or manner subject to any alteration?'

'It must stay in the same condition and state, Socrates,' said Cebes.

'What about the many beautiful things, such as people or horses or cloaks or any other things whatsoever that have that particular property? 78e
Or again, things that are equal, and so on for all the things that share the names of those entities we mentioned? Do they stay in the same state, or, in quite the opposite way to those entities, are they virtually never in the same state at all, either as themselves or as one another?'

'They too,' said Cebes, 'are as you say: they never stay in the same condition.'

'Now isn't it true that these you could touch, see and perceive with the 79a
other senses, but that when it comes to those that stay in the same state, you could never get hold of them with anything other than the reasoning of your thought, such things being unseen and not visible?'

'That's absolutely true,' said Cebes.

'So do you want us to assume,' said Socrates, 'that there are two classes of beings, one visible, the other unseen?'

'Let's do so,' he said.

'The unseen always staying in the same state, the visible never doing so?'

'Let's assume that too,' he said.

79b 'Now,' he said, 'aren't we ourselves part soul, part body?'

'Exactly so,' he said.

'Then to which of the two sorts do we say the body would be more similar and more akin?'

'That much,' he said, 'is obvious to everyone: to the visible.'

'What about the soul? Is it something visible or unseen?'

'It isn't seen by human beings, at any rate, Socrates,' he said.

'But what we were talking about was what is and what isn't visible to human nature. Or do you think that it was to some other nature?'

'No, to human nature.'

'So what do we say about soul? That it's visible or invisible?'

'Not visible.'

'Unseen, then?'

'Yes.'

'In that case, soul is more similar than body to the unseen, whereas body is more similar to the visible.'

79c 'That's absolutely inevitable, Socrates.'

'Now weren't we also saying some time ago[32] that whenever the soul additionally uses the body for considering something, whether through seeing or through hearing or through some other sense – for to consider something through the body *is* to do so through sense-perception – at those times it is dragged by the body into things that never stay in the same state, and the soul itself wanders and is disturbed and giddy as if drunk, because the things it is grasping have the same kind of instability?'

'Certainly.'

79d 'But that whenever the soul considers alone by itself, it gets away into that which is pure, always in existence, and immortal, and which stays in the same condition; that the soul, because it is akin to this, always comes to be with it whenever alone by itself and able to do so; that the soul is then at rest from its wandering, and in relation to those entities stays always in the same state and condition, because the things it is grasping have the same kind of stability; and that this state of the soul is called "wisdom"?'

[32] At 65a–67b.

'That's completely right and true, Socrates,' he said.

'So, once again, given both what was said before and what we're saying now, to which of the two sorts do you think soul is more similar and more 79e
akin?'

'I think, Socrates,' he said, 'that from this approach everyone, even the dullest learner, would grant that soul is in every possible way more similar to what always stays in the same condition than to what does not.'

'What about the body?'

'To the other sort.'

'Consider it along the following lines as well. Whenever soul and body are in the same place, nature instructs the latter to play the slave and be 80a
ruled, the former to rule and play the master. Again on this basis, which of the two do you think is similar to the divine, and which to the mortal? Or don't you think that the divine is naturally the kind to rule and lead, the mortal the kind to be ruled and play the slave?'

'Yes, I do.'

'So which of the two does the soul resemble?'

'It's perfectly obvious, Socrates, that the soul resembles the divine, and that the body resembles the mortal.'

'Consider then, Cebes,' he said, 'whether from everything that has been said our results are as follows: that soul is most similar to that 80b
which is divine, immortal, intelligible, uniform, and incapable of being disintegrated, and which always stays in the same condition and state as itself; but that body, on the other hand, is most similar to what is human, mortal, resistant to intelligence, multiform, able to be disintegrated, and never in the same state as itself. Besides these properties, my dear Cebes, can we name any other in respect of which it does not turn out in this same way?'

'No, we can't.'

'Very well. If all this is the case, isn't body the sort of thing to be quickly disintegrated, but soul, on the other hand, the sort to be altogether incapable of being disintegrated, or nearly so?'

'Yes, of course.' 80c

'Now do you realize,' he said, 'that when the human being has died, the visible part of him – the body, lodged in the visible realm, the thing that we call a corpse – which is the sort of thing to be disintegrated, fall apart and be scattered to the winds, does not find itself in any of these states straight away, but stays on for a reasonably long time, particularly

if someone dies with his body in fine condition and at an age to match. For if the body has been shrunk and embalmed, like those who were
80d embalmed in Egypt, then it stays almost whole for an unimaginably long time, and even if the body rots, certain parts of it – bones, sinews and all such things – are still practically immortal, aren't they?'

'Yes.'

'But as for the soul, his unseen part, which gets away into a different place of this same kind, one which is noble, pure and unseen, Hades as it truly is,[33] where it will meet the good and wise god, the place to which, god willing, my soul too must go imminently – when the soul, which we have found to be naturally of this kind, is separated from the body, does it immediately get scattered to the winds[34] and perish, as ordinary
80e people say? Far from it, my dear Cebes and Simmias. Rather, the truth is as follows. First, take a case where a soul is separated in a pure condition, bringing with it nothing from the body, because it did not associate with the body at all in its life, at least when it had the choice, but instead avoided the body and stayed gathered together alone into itself, since that was its constant practice. Such a soul is doing nothing but pursue
81a philosophy correctly and practise to be ready for really being dead. Or wouldn't this be practice for death?'

'It certainly would.'

'So does a soul in this condition go off into what is similar to it, the unseen, the divine, immortal and wise, where after its arrival it can be happy, separated from wandering, unintelligence, fears, savage sorts of love and the other human evils, and just as is said of the initiates, does it truly spend the rest of time with gods? Is this what we should say, Cebes, or something else?'

'We should indeed say this,' replied Cebes.

81b 'But now, I mean, take a case where a soul has been defiled and is impure when it is separated from the body, because it has always been coupled[35] with the body, waited on it, loved it and been bewitched by it – by its desires and pleasures – so that the soul thinks nothing is real except the corporeal, what one can touch, see, drink, eat and enjoy sexually. On the other hand, it has come always to hate, dread and avoid what is murky

[33] Socrates exploits the similarity between 'Hades' (Greek *Haïdēs*) and *aïdēs* ('unseen'). At *Cratylus* 404b, however, Socrates rejects this as an actual etymology of the name.

[34] Compare 77e.

[35] The Greek verb (literally 'be with') is also used of sexual intercourse.

and unseen to the eyes, but is intelligible and is grasped with philosophy. Do you think that a soul in this condition will be unalloyed and alone by itself when separated?' 81c

'Certainly not,' he said.

'Instead, I suppose, it will be intermingled with the corporeal, which the body's company and coupling have made part of its nature, because of their constant coupling and because of its long practice?'

'That's right.'

'And one must suppose, my friend, that the corporeal is heavy, weighty, earthy and visible. That's what this sort of soul actually contains, and so it is weighed down and drawn back into the visible region by fear of the unseen and of Hades,[36] drifting, as it is said, around monuments and 81d tombs, the very places where certain shadowy apparitions of souls really have been seen. Such apparitions are presented by souls like these, those that have not been released in a pure way but have something of the visible – which is why they are seen.'

'Yes, that's likely, Socrates.'

'It certainly is likely, Cebes, and also that they are not at all the souls of the good, but those of the bad, which must wander around such places, paying the penalty for their former way of life, wicked as it was. What is more, they wander until the time when they are bound again into a body 81e by their desire for the corporeality that follows them around. And they are bound, in all likelihood, into whatever sorts of character they happen to have practised in their life.'

'Just which sorts do you mean, Socrates?'

'For example, it is likely that people who have practised acts of gluttony, recklessness and drunkenness, and have not shown caution, come to be embodied in the species which include donkeys and beasts like that. Don't 82a you think so?'

'That's very likely.'

'Right, and that those who have honoured, above all else, acts of injustice, tyrannies and thefts, are embodied in those species that include wolves, hawks and kites. Where else shall we say such souls would go?'

'No doubt,' said Cebes, 'into species like these.'

'Then,' he said, 'isn't it quite clear which way each of the other types too would go, on the basis of resemblance to their respective practices?'

[36] See n. 33 above.

'It's quite clear, of course,' he said.

'Now are the happiest,' he said, 'even of these, and the ones that go to
82b the best place, those who have pursued the common virtue of ordinary civic life, what they call "temperance" and "justice", which has come about from habit and practice without philosophy and intelligence?'

'In just what sense are these people happiest?'

'Because it's likely that they come back into a civic and tame species like themselves, that of bees, I suppose, or wasps or ants, or even back into the very same one, the human race, and that decent men are born from them.'

'That's likely.'

'Yes, but coming into the race of gods is not sanctioned for anyone
82c who did not pursue philosophy and has not departed in a perfectly pure condition, but only for one who loves learning. It is for these reasons, my dear Simmias and Cebes, that those who truly love wisdom keep away from all the desires that concern the body, retain their resolve, and do not surrender themselves to these desires, and not at all because they fear poverty and loss of property, as the money-loving majority do. Nor do they keep away from such desires because they fear dishonour and a reputation for immorality, as the lovers of power and honour do.'

'No, because that would be out of character, Socrates,' said Cebes.

82d 'Indeed it would,' he said. 'Because of this, Cebes, those who care at all about their own soul, and do not spend their lives getting their bodies into shape, dismiss all those people and do not take the same journey as they do, because they recognize that such people do not know where they are going. They themselves believe that in their actions they must not oppose philosophy and the release and purifying rite that philosophy provides. Following philosophy they head in the direction in which it leads.'

'How, Socrates?'

'I'll tell you,' he said. 'You see,' he continued, 'the lovers of learning
82e are aware that when philosophy takes over their soul, the soul really is bound thoroughly in the body and stuck to it, and is forced to consider the real things through it as if through a cage, and not on its own through itself, and that it drifts in utter ignorance. And philosophy observes the cleverness of the prison – that it works through desire, the best way to make the prisoner himself assist in his imprisonment. Anyway, as I was

saying, the lovers of learning are aware that the soul is in this condition 83a
when philosophy takes it over, and that philosophy gently reassures it
and attempts to release it by showing that inquiry conducted through the
eyes is full of deceit, as is likewise inquiry conducted through the ears and
through the other senses. Philosophy, they are aware, persuades the soul
to distance itself from the senses, except to the extent that use of them is
necessary, and encourages the soul to collect and gather itself alone into
itself, and to trust nothing but itself, concerning whichever real thing, 83b
alone by itself, the soul has intelligence of, when the soul too is alone by
itself. Philosophy, they are also aware, encourages the soul not to regard
as true anything else that the soul considers by other means and in other
things, and to believe that, whereas this latter kind of thing is perceptible
and visible, what the soul itself sees is intelligible and unseen.

'Now the soul of the true philosopher thinks that it should not oppose
this release, and that is why it refrains from pleasures, desires, pains and
fears as much as it can: it reckons that when someone experiences intense
pleasure, pain, fear or desire, they do not inflict on him the minor injuries
one might assume (for example, falling ill or wasting money because of 83c
his desires) but that they inflict on him the greatest and most extreme of
all evils, without it even appearing in his reckoning.'

'What is that, Socrates?' said Cebes.

'It's that the soul of every human being, when it experiences intense
pleasure or pain at something, is forced to believe at that moment that
whatever particularly gives rise to that feeling is most self-evidently real,
when it isn't so. These are above all visible things, aren't they?'

'Certainly.'

'Now is it when feeling this that soul is particularly bound tight by 83d
body?'

'How so?'

'Because each pleasure and pain rivets and pins it to the body as if with
a nail, and makes it corporeal, since it believes to be real the very things
that the body says are real. Since it has the same beliefs as the body and
enjoys the same things, it is forced, I think, to come to have the same ways
and the same sustenance, and to be the sort of soul never to enter Hades
in a pure condition, but every time to depart infected by the body, and so
to fall quickly back again into another body and, as it were, be sown and 83e
implanted, and because of this be deprived of the company of the divine
and pure and uniform.'

'That's very true, Socrates,' said Cebes.

'So, Cebes, it is for these reasons that the proper lovers of learning are composed and courageous. It is not for the reasons for which most people are so. Or do you think it is?'

84a 'No, I certainly don't.'

'No, indeed. But that is how a philosophical man's soul would reason. It would not suppose that, its own release being a job for philosophy, while philosophy is doing that the soul should of its own accord surrender itself for the pleasures and pains to bind it back inside again, and should undertake a Penelope's interminable task by working at a sort of web in reverse.[37] Instead such a man's soul secures a rest from these things, following its reasoning and being always engaged in reasoning, viewing
84b what is true, divine and not an object of opinion, and sustained by that, and supposes both that it should live in this way as long as it lives, and that when it meets its end it will enter what is akin and of the same kind, and will be separated from human evils. So, given that sort of sustenance, there is no risk of its fearing, Simmias and Cebes,*[38] that it may be torn apart during its separation from the body and blown apart by the winds, and then fly away in all directions and no longer be anything anywhere.'

84c Now when Socrates had said that, a long silence fell, and Socrates himself was absorbed in the argument he had given, or so it seemed from his appearance, and most of us were too. But Cebes and Simmias continued to talk with each other in an undertone. Socrates caught sight of them and asked: 'What is it? Do you think that there is something missing in what was said? Because of course it still contains many grounds for suspicion and counter-attack, at least if one is to go right through it properly. Now if the two of you are considering something else, then I'm talking quite beside the point. But if you are at all puzzled about these
84d things, then don't for a moment hang back from speaking out yourselves and explaining, if you think that it would have been said better in some other way, and also from inviting me to help you, if you think that you'll resolve your puzzles any better with my aid.'

Simmias said: 'Very well, Socrates, I'll tell you the truth. For some time each of us has been puzzled, and so we have been prompting each

[37] The soul would be working in the opposite way to Penelope in the *Odyssey*; Penelope chose to unravel what she had woven, whereas the soul would reweave what philosophy had unravelled.

*[38] Omitting ταῦτα δ' ἐπιτηδεύσασα (84b4–5), with J. Burnet *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford, 1911), as a gloss on ἐκ τῆς τοιαύτης τροφῆς.

other and telling each other to ask a question, for, although we're eager for an answer, we're reluctant to trouble you, in case it may be irksome to you because of your present plight.'

When Socrates heard that he chuckled and said: 'Oh dear, Simmias! It would surely be hard for me to persuade other people that I don't consider 84e
my present lot a plight, when I can't persuade even the two of you, but instead you worry that I'm in a rather more discontented state now than in my earlier life. You seem to think that I'm worse at prophecy than the swans: though they sing at earlier times too, it is when they realize they must die that they sing longest and most of all,[39] overjoyed that they are 85a
about to depart to meet the god whose servants they are. But because of their own fear of death human beings tell lies about the swans as well, and say that it is out of distress that they leave with a song, lamenting their death; they do not keep in mind the fact that no bird sings when hungry, cold, or in some other kind of distress, not even the nightingale herself, or the swallow or the hoopoe, the very birds said to sing in lament from distress. But these birds do not seem to me to sing because of distress, and nor do the swans, but since, I believe, they belong to Apollo, they 85b
are prophetic and know in advance the good things in Hades, and so they sing in delight on that day more than at earlier times. Now I believe that I myself am the swans' fellow-slave and sacred to the same god, and have prophecy from my master no less than they do, and am being separated from my life with no more regret than they are. No, as far as that is concerned, you should say and ask whatever you want, for as long as eleven Athenian men[40] permit.'

'Good,' said Simmias. 'I'll tell you what puzzles me, and Cebes here 85c
in his turn will say in what respect he doesn't accept what has been said. Well, I think, Socrates, as perhaps you do too, that knowing the clear truth about things like this in our present life is either impossible or something extremely difficult, but that all the same not testing from every angle what is said about them, refusing to give up until one is exhausted from considering it in every way, is the mark of an extremely feeble sort of man. Because concerning them one ought surely to achieve *one* of the following: either to learn or discover how things are, or, if it is impossible

[39] Retaining the MSS reading μάλιστα at 85a1–2, with W.J. Verdenius, 'Notes on Plato's *Phaedo*', *Mnemosyne* 4.11 (1958), 193–243 and Christopher Rowe, *Plato: Phaedo* (Cambridge, 1993). Others emend to κάλλιστα, yielding the translation 'longest and most beautifully'.

[40] See p. 45 n. 7 above.

85d to do that, at least to take the best human proposition – the hardest one to disprove – and to ride on that as if one were taking one's chances on a raft, and to sail through life in that way, unless one could get through the journey with more safety and less precariousness on a more solid vehicle, some divine proposition. Certainly on this occasion I won't be ashamed to ask my question, now that you yourself say as much, and so I won't be able to blame myself later for not having said now what I think. For, Socrates, ever since I've been considering what has been said, both on my own and with Cebes here, it hasn't seemed entirely sufficient.'

85e Socrates said: 'Yes, my friend, and maybe you're right. But tell me in just what respect it seems insufficient.'

'In the following respect, I think,' he said. 'One might say the same thing about attunement too, and a lyre and strings: that the attunement is

86a something invisible, incorporeal, and utterly beautiful and divine in the tuned lyre, whereas the lyre itself and its strings are bodies, corporeal, composite and earthy, and akin to the mortal. So when someone either smashes the lyre or cuts and snaps its strings, what if one were to insist, with the same argument as yours, that the attunement must still exist and not have perished? For there would be no way, when the lyre still exists with its strings snapped, and when the strings themselves, which

86b are of a mortal kind, still exist, that the attunement, which is akin to and of the same nature as the divine and immortal, could have perished, and perished before the mortal did. No, he'd say, the attunement must still exist on its own somewhere, and the bits of wood and the strings must rot away before anything happens to the attunement. In actual fact, Socrates, I think that you yourself are well aware that we[41] take the soul to be something of precisely this kind, since our body is made taut, so to speak, and held together by hot, cold, dry, wet and certain other such things,

86c and our soul is a blend and attunement of those very things, when they are blended properly and proportionately with one another.

'Anyway, if the soul really is a sort of attunement, obviously when our body is loosened or tautened beyond proportion by illnesses or other evils, the soul must perish at once, however divine it may be, just like other sorts of attunement, both those consisting in sounds and those in

[41] This seems to refer to an unspecified Pythagorean circle, which includes Echecrates (88d) as well as Simmias, and has strong associations with the recorded views of Philolaus on 'attunements' (Greek *harmoniai*; see C. Huffman, 'Philolaus', in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*), even though no reliable source explicitly attributes to him the thesis that soul is an attunement.

all the products of the craftsmen, whereas each body's remains must last for a long time, until they are burned up or rot away. So consider what 86d
we'll say in reply to this argument, should someone claim that the soul is a blend of the things in the body, and so is the first thing to perish in what is called "death".'

Socrates now looked across with wide eyes, as he often used to do, smiled and said: 'Yes, a fair point from Simmias. So if one of you can resolve the difficulty better than I can, why not answer him? For in fact he seems to be getting to grips with the argument with some success. However, before we answer I think that we should wait to hear from 86e
Cebes here what charge he for his part has to bring against the argument, so that in due time we can decide what to say; and then after we've heard from him we should either concede the point to them, if they seem to be hitting a right note, or, if not, then and only then plead in the argument's defence. So come on,' he said, 'Cebes, take your turn and tell us what it was that was troubling you.'

'I'll tell you,' said Cebes. 'Well, the argument seems still to be where it was, and to be open to the same charge that we were making earlier. That 87a
our soul existed even before it entered its present form, I don't retreat from saying that this has been very neatly and, if it isn't tasteless to say so, quite sufficiently proved. But that it also still exists somewhere after we have died – there I don't think the point has been proved. Now I don't accept Simmias' objection that soul isn't something tougher and longer-lasting than body, for I think it is far superior indeed in all those respects. "So why are you still doubtful," the argument would say, "when you see that the *weaker* one still exists when the human being has died? Don't 87b
you think that the longer-lasting one must still be kept intact during this time?"

'Consider then whether there is anything in my response to that. It seems, you see, that like Simmias I too need a sort of simile. For I think that the way in which these points are made is the same as if one were to give the following argument about a human being, a weaver who had died in old age. One might argue that the human being has not perished but exists intact somewhere, providing as evidence the fact that the cloak that he himself wove for his own use and wore is intact and has not perished. Should someone doubt him, he'd ask which is the longer-lasting kind of 87c
thing: a human being or a cloak that is in use and frequently worn. When the other replied that the human being is by far the longer-lasting kind,

he'd suppose that it had been proved that the human being was therefore certainly intact, since the *shorter*-lasting one hadn't perished.

'But in actual fact, Simmias, I think it isn't like that – for you too should consider what I'm saying. Everyone would protest that that is a simple-minded thing for someone to say; for that weaver of mine wore out and wove for himself many such cloaks, and then perished after the
87d whole lot of them; and this was presumably before the last one, yet a human being is not, for all that, inferior to a cloak or weaker than it. Soul in its relation to body would, I think, warrant this same image, and someone who says these same things about them would seem to me to be saying something quite reasonable, that the soul is long-lasting, the body weaker and shorter-lasting. None the less, he'd say, although each soul wears out many bodies, especially if it lives for many years (because if the body is in flux and perishing when the human being is
87e still alive, the soul still always reweaves what is being worn out), all the same, when the soul perishes it must at that moment have its last piece of weaving and perish before that one alone. And, after the soul perishes, only then does the body show its natural weakness and quickly rot and disappear. And so it is not right as yet to put one's trust in this argu-
88a ment and be confident that our soul still exists somewhere after we have died.

'Let us suppose someone conceded even more to one who says what you are saying,[42] and granted him not only that our souls existed during the time before we were even born, but also that, after we have died, there is nothing to prevent the souls of some people from still existing and from being destined to go on existing, to be born many times and to die again, on the grounds that the soul is so tough in nature that it can endure being born many times. But let us suppose that, after granting this much, he refused to concede the further point that the soul does not suffer in its many births and at the end perish completely during one of
88b those deaths, and that he said that no one knows which death and which parting from the body make the soul perish. Because, he would say, none of us can observe that. Now if this is so, nobody who is confident in the face of death can fail to be displaying unintelligent confidence, unless he can prove that soul is altogether immortal and imperishable. Otherwise

[42] Deleting ἤ in 88a2. If it is retained we should translate: 'let us suppose one conceded to someone saying even more than what you are saying'.

someone about to die must always fear for his own soul that it may perish completely in its imminent disconnection from the body.'

Now when we all heard them say this our mood took an unpleasant 88c
turn, as we later told each other, because we had been firmly persuaded by the earlier argument, but then they seemed to have disturbed us all over again and sent us plummeting into doubt, not just about the arguments given before, but also about what would be said later. We were worried that we might be worthless as judges, or even that the very facts of the matter might merit doubt.

ECHECRATES: Heavens, Phaedo, I quite sympathize with you. Now
that I too have heard you, it makes me too say something like this to 88d
myself: 'What argument will we still trust now? How utterly persuasive the argument was that Socrates was giving, yet now it has been plunged into doubt!' You see, this theory that our soul is a kind of attunement has an extraordinary hold on me, both at this moment and at all times, and now that it has been mentioned it has reminded me, as it were, that I myself too had already come to believe this. I really need some other argument, a brand-new one, that will persuade me that when someone has died his soul does not die with him. So for heaven's sake tell me how Socrates pursued the argument. Was he too at all noticeably upset, as you 88e
say the rest of you were, or did he instead come calmly to the argument's rescue? And was his help sufficient, or inadequate? Please go through everything for us as accurately as you can.

PHAEDO: Well, Echecrates, I'd often admired Socrates, but I never
respected him more than when I was with him then. Now perhaps there 89a
is nothing surprising in his having something to say. But I particularly admired in him first how pleasantly, genially and respectfully he took in the young men's argument, then how discerningly he noticed the effect the arguments had had on us, and next how well he cured us and rallied us when we'd taken to our heels in defeat, so to speak, and spurred us on to follow at his side and consider the argument with him.

ECHECRATES: So how did he do so?

PHAEDO: I'll tell you. I happened to be sitting to his right, on a stool 89b
next to the couch, and he was sitting much higher up than I was. Now he gave my head a stroke and squeezed the hairs on my neck – he had the habit of poking fun at my hair from time to time – and said: 'So tomorrow, Phaedo, I expect you'll cut off these beautiful locks.'

'I suppose so, Socrates,' I said.

'You won't, if you follow my advice.'

'What then?'

'I'll cut off my locks,' he said, 'and you'll cut off these ones today – if
89c our argument dies and we can't revive it. As for me, if I were you and the argument escaped me, I'd swear an oath like the Argives[43] not to grow my hair long until I return to combat and defeat the argument of Simmias and Cebes.'

'But,' I said, 'even Heracles, as the story goes, couldn't fight against two.'

'Well, call for *me*,' he said, 'as your Iolaus,[44] while it's still light.'

'Then I call for you,' I said, 'not as Heracles, but as Iolaus calling Heracles.'

'It won't make any difference,' he said. 'But first let's make sure that a certain thing doesn't happen to us.'

'What sort of thing?' I asked.

89d 'Becoming haters of arguments,' he said, 'like those who come to hate people. Because there's no greater evil that could happen to one than hating arguments. Hating arguments and hating people come about in the same way. For misanthropy sets in as a result of putting all one's trust in someone and doing so without expertise, and taking the person to be entirely truthful, sound and trustworthy, and then a little later finding him to be wicked and untrustworthy – and then again with someone else. When this happens to someone many times, particularly with those
89e whom he would take to be his very closest friends, and he has been falling out with people again and again, he ends up hating everyone and thinking that there is nothing sound in anyone at all. Haven't you ever seen this happen?'

'I certainly have,' I said.

'Now this is deplorable,' he said, 'and obviously someone like that was trying to deal with people without having expertise in human qualities, wasn't he? For surely if he had been doing so with expertise he'd have
90a viewed matters as they really are: he would have recognized that both the very good and the very wicked are few in number, and that those in between are the most numerous.'

'What do you mean?' I asked.

[43] According to Herodotus (1.82) the Argives swore that they would not grow their hair long until they recovered Thyreae from the Spartans.

[44] Heracles' charioteer and assistant.

'It's just like the very small and large,' he said. 'Do you think there is anything rarer than discovering a very large or very small person, or dog, or anything else? Or similarly one that is swift or slow, ugly or beautiful, light or dark? Haven't you observed that in all such cases the far extremities are rare and few, while those in between are plentiful and numerous?'

'Certainly,' I said.

'So do you think,' he said, 'that if a competition in wickedness were 90b
set up, here too very few would come to the fore?'

'That's likely enough,' I said.

'Yes, it is likely,' he said. 'All the same, arguments do not resemble people in that way (I was following your lead just now), but in the following way: when someone without expertise in arguments trusts an argument to be true, and then a little later thinks that it is false, sometimes when it is, sometimes when it isn't, and when he does the same again with one argument after another. This applies particularly to those who 90c
have spent time dealing with the arguments used in disputation. As you know, they end up thinking that they have become very wise, and that they alone have understood that there is nothing sound or firm in any thing or in any argument, but that all things turn back and forth, exactly as if in the Euripus,[45] and do not stay put for any time.'

'That's quite true,' I said.

'Now, Phaedo,' he said, 'it would be a lamentable fate if there really were some true and firm argument that could be understood, and yet 90d
from associating with arguments of another sort – the very same ones seeming true at some times but not at others – someone were to blame not himself or his own lack of expertise, but instead because of his agitation were to end up gratefully transferring the blame from himself to the arguments, and from that point to spend the rest of his life hating and belittling arguments, deprived of both truth and knowledge about things.'

'Yes,' I said, 'that would be lamentable indeed.'

'So first let's make sure we avoid this,' he said, 'and let's not allow into 90e
our soul the notion that there's probably nothing sound in arguments. It will be much better to assume that *we* are not sound yet, but must make a

[45] A strait separating Euboea from the Greek mainland, where the current frequently reverses direction.

manly effort to be sound. You and the others should do this for the sake
91a of your whole life to come, but I for the sake of my death considered in its own right, because concerning that very thing I'm now in danger of desiring not wisdom but victory, like those who are utterly uneducated. For when they are at odds about something, they also do not care about the facts of the matter they are arguing about, but strive to make what they themselves have proposed seem true to those who are present. And I think that now I will differ from them only to this extent: I won't strive to make what I say seem true to those who are present, except as a byproduct, but instead to make it seem so as much as possible to myself.
91b For I reckon, my dear friend – see how ambitious I'm being – that if what I'm saying is actually true, then it's quite right to be convinced; if, on the other hand, there is nothing in store for one who has died, at least in this period before I die I will be less of a mournful burden to those who are with me, and this folly won't stay with me – that would have been an evil – but will perish shortly. This then, Simmias and Cebes, is the baggage I bring with me when approaching the argument. But as for you,
91c if you take my advice, you'll give little thought to Socrates and much more to the truth: if you think I say something true, agree with me, and if not, use every argument to resist me, making sure that my eagerness doesn't make me deceive myself and you simultaneously, and that I don't leave my sting in you, like a bee, before I depart.

'Well, come on,' he said. 'First remind me what you were saying, in case I turn out not to remember. Now Simmias, I believe, has doubts and fears that even though the soul is something both more divine
91d and more beautiful than the body, it may perish first, because it is a sort of attunement. Cebes, on the other hand, seemed to me to grant me this point – that soul is longer-lasting than body – but to suppose that nobody can be certain whether, after wearing out *many* bodies in a long sequence, upon leaving behind its last body the soul may not itself perish, and whether death may not be this very thing, soul's perishing, since body for its part has no rest at all from its constant perishing. Aren't these just the points, Simmias and Cebes, that we must consider?'

91e They both then agreed that those were the points to consider.

'Well,' he said, 'do you not accept any of the previous arguments, or do you accept some but not others?'

'Some,' the two of them said, 'but not others.'

'What then,' he asked, 'do you say about that argument in which we said that learning is recollection, and that since this is the case our soul must exist somewhere else before it gets bound in the 92a
body?'

'As for me,' said Cebes, 'back then I was incredibly convinced by it, and now I stand by it more than by any other argument.'

'Yes, this is true of me too,' said Simmias, 'and I'd be greatly surprised if I were ever to change my mind, at least about *that*.'

To which Socrates said: 'Well, my Theban visitor, you must change your mind, if the notion remains that attunement is a composite thing, and that soul is composed, as a sort of attunement, of the features of the body when these are held taut. For presumably you won't allow 92b
yourself to say that an attunement existed, already composed, before those things existed of which it was due to be composed. Or will you?'

'Not at all, Socrates,' he said.

'Then do you realize,' he said, 'that this is what you do turn out to be saying when you assert that the soul exists even before it enters a human form or body, and that it exists despite being composed of things that do not yet exist? Because an attunement is not like the thing to which you are comparing it: the lyre, its strings and its notes come into being 92c
beforehand, still untuned, and the attunement comes together last of all, and is the first to perish. So how will this argument of yours work in concert with that other one?'

'It simply can't,' answered Simmias.

'Yet if there is any argument that should work in concert,' he said, 'it's one about *attunement*!'

'True,' said Simmias.

'This argument of yours, then, doesn't work in concert. Consider which of the two arguments you choose, that learning is recollection, or that soul is attunement?'

'The first one, Socrates,' he said, 'by far. For the second has come 92d
to me with no proof but with a sort of plausibility and outward appeal, which is the basis on which most people believe it too. But I am aware that arguments that give their proofs by means of what is plausible make hollow claims, and unless one guards oneself very well against them are utterly deceitful, both in geometry and in all other subjects. The argument about recollection and learning, on the other hand, has been provided by

means of a hypothesis worthy of acceptance. Because it was said[46] I think that it is as certain that our soul existed even before it entered a body as
92e that there exists in its own right the being that bears the label "what it is". And I have accepted that hypothesis, or so I convince myself, on both sufficient and correct grounds. So for these reasons, it seems, I mustn't allow myself or anyone else to say that soul is attunement.'

'Now what if you consider it in the following way, Simmias?' he asked.
93a 'Do you think that an attunement or any other kind of compound is the sort of thing to be in some state different from that of its components?'

'Not at all.'

'And not the sort of thing either, I suppose, to do something or have something done to it beyond what those things either do or have done to them?'

He concurred.

'In that case, an attunement is not the sort of thing to *govern* its components, but rather to follow them.'

He thought so too.

'Then there is not a remote chance of an attunement making a movement or a sound opposed to its own parts, or opposing them in some other way.'

'No, not a chance.'

'Next, isn't each attunement naturally an attunement according to the way in which it was tuned?'

'I don't understand,' he said.

'Isn't it the case,' he said, 'that if it were tuned more and to a greater
93b extent – assuming that this can happen – it would be more of an attunement and would be a greater one, whereas if it were tuned less and to an inferior extent, it would be a lesser and inferior one?'

'Yes, absolutely.'

'Now is this true of soul? That is to say, is one soul in even the smallest degree this very thing, soul, more and to a greater extent than another, or less so and to an inferior extent?'

'No, in no way whatever,' he replied.

'Come on then,' he said, 'in heaven's name. Is it said that while one soul has intelligence and virtue and is good, another has unintelligence
93c and wickedness and is bad? And is it truly said?'

[46] At 76e–77a.

'Of course it's true.'

'Well, take those people who have proposed that soul is attunement. How will one of them describe these things – virtue and vice – which are in our souls? As a further kind of attunement and non-attunement? And will they say that one soul – the good one – has been tuned and contains another attunement, when it itself is an attunement, but that another soul is itself untuned and does not contain another attunement?'

'I for one can't say,' said Simmias. 'But clearly someone who adopted this hypothesis would say some such thing.'

'But it has already been agreed,' he said, 'that one soul is no more nor 93d
less soul than another one, and the agreement comes to the following: one attunement is not an attunement any more or to a greater extent, nor less or to an inferior extent, than another one. Correct?'

'Entirely.'

'Good, and if it is not at all more nor less an attunement, it is neither more nor less tuned. Is that right?'

'It is.'

'And if it is neither more nor less tuned, can it have a greater or lesser share of attunement, or only an equal one?'

'An equal one.'

'Now since one soul is no more nor less this very thing, soul, than 93e
another, it isn't more tuned, or less tuned either?'

'Quite so.'

'Right, and if this is true of soul, a soul could not have any greater share of non-attunement, or for that matter of attunement?'

'No, certainly not.'

'And now if *this* is true of soul, could one soul have any greater share of vice or virtue than another, if, that is, vice were non-attunement and virtue attunement?'

'No, no greater at all.'

'Or rather, Simmias, according to the correct argument, presumably no 94a
soul will have a share of vice if it is an attunement; for since an attunement is, of course, completely this very thing, an attunement, it could never have a share of non-attunement.'

'Definitely not.'

'Nor of course, since a soul is completely a soul, could it have a share of vice.'

'No, how could it, given what's been said already?'

'In that case, by this argument we find that all souls of all living creatures will be good to the same extent, if it is the nature of souls to be this very thing, souls, to the same extent.'

'I think so, Socrates,' he said.

'Do you find it acceptable,' said Socrates, 'that this should be said, and
94b that such should be the upshot of the argument, if the hypothesis that soul is attunement were correct?'

'No, in no way whatever,' replied Simmias.

'Next,' he said, 'of all the things in a human being, is there any other than soul that you would say is in command, and especially a wise soul?'

'No, I wouldn't.'

'Does soul do so by surrendering to the body's affections or by actually opposing them? What I mean is something like the following. When heat and thirst are there inside, the soul pulls towards the opposite, not drinking, and when hunger is there inside, the soul pulls towards not eating. And there are surely countless other ways
94c in which we see the soul opposing what belongs to the body, aren't there?'

'Certainly.'

'Now, again, didn't we previously agree that, if it really were an attunement, it would never make music opposed to the way in which its components were tautened, loosened, struck or affected in any other respect, but would instead follow them and never direct them?'

'We did, of course,' he said.

'Well then, don't we discover that in reality it does quite the oppo-
94d site, directing all its alleged components, and opposing them almost everywhere through its entire life, and playing the master in every way, correcting some of them – those to which gymnastics and medicine are appropriate – more ruthlessly and with certain hardships, but others more gently, some with threats, others with reprimands, conversing with the desires, rages and fears as if it were one thing and they another? Homer himself has, I think, represented this sort of thing in the *Odyssey*,[47] when he says of Odysseus:

> He struck his chest and spoke reproachfully to his heart:
> 94e "Endure, my heart. You once endured something even more shameful."

[47] At 20.17–18.

'Now do you suppose that when Homer composed this he thought that soul is attunement and the sort of thing to be led by the body's affections? Didn't he think instead that soul is the sort of thing to lead them and play the master, and that it is something far more divine than befits an attunement?'

'I do indeed think so, Socrates.'

'In that case, my excellent friend, it isn't in any way right for us to say that soul is a sort of attunement. If we did, it seems we'd be agreeing 95a
neither with Homer, a divine poet, nor with ourselves.'

'Quite so,' he said.

'Well then,' said Socrates, 'it seems that Theban Harmonia[48] and her kind have become fairly propitious to us. But what about Cadmus and his kind, Cebes? How and with what argument will we propitiate them?'

'You'll discover it, I believe,' said Cebes. 'Certainly this argument which you gave in answer to attunement was astonishingly contrary to my expectations. You see, when Simmias spoke up because he was puzzled, I really did wonder whether anyone would have any way of dealing with 95b
his argument. It thus seemed to me quite extraordinary that it didn't withstand the very first attack of your own argument. So I wouldn't be surprised if the same things happened to Cadmus' argument too.'

'Don't go making bold claims, my friend,' said Socrates, 'in case some malign power turns our upcoming argument to flight. Anyway, god will see to that, but let us in Homeric style come to close quarters and test whether there actually is something in what you're saying. Now then, the gist of what you're seeking is as follows. You think it must be demonstrated that our soul is both imperishable and immortal, if it is not to be 95c
unintelligent and foolish for a philosophical man to believe confidently, when he is about to die, that after his death he will fare better there than if he had lived a different life before he met his end. As for showing that the soul is something tough and godlike, and that it existed even before we became human beings – there is nothing, you say, to stop all of that being evidence not of immortality, but of the fact that soul is long-lasting and existed somewhere previously for an unimaginably long time, and used to know and do a great deal. Anyhow, you said, that does not make 95d
it any the more immortal: on the contrary, the very fact of coming into

[48] The wife of Cadmus, legendary founder of Thebes. Socrates refers to Simmias' objection (*harmonia* being the Greek word translated 'attunement').

a human body was the start of its perishing, like a disease. On this view, the soul really suffers as it lives this life and eventually, in what is called "death", it perishes. Now whether it enters a body once or many times makes no difference, you claim, at least as regards the fear each of us has. For anyone of any intelligence *should* be afraid, if they do not know that
95e it is immortal and cannot offer an argument to show as much. This is the sort of thing, Cebes, that I think you're saying. I'm deliberately going back over it repetitively to make sure nothing escapes us, and to let you add or take away something if you want.'

To which Cebes said: 'No, I don't want to take away or add anything now. That's just what I'm saying.'

Now Socrates paused for quite some time and considered something by himself, and then said: 'What you're seeking is no small matter, Cebes; we must study thoroughly and as a whole the cause of coming-to-be and
96a ceasing-to-be. So, if you like, I'll recount my experiences concerning them; then, if you see something useful in what I say, you'll use it to convince yourself about the very points you raise.'

'But of course I'd like that,' said Cebes.

'Then listen, because I'm going to tell you. Well, Cebes,' he said, 'when I was young I became incredibly eager for the sort of wisdom that they call research into nature. That used to strike me as quite sublime: to know the causes of each thing, why each one comes to be, why it perishes, and why
96b it is. Time and again I would shift in different directions, considering first the following sort of questions. Is it when the hot and the cold start to decompose, as some people were saying, that living things grow into a unity? Is it because of blood that we think, or air, or fire? Or is it none of these, but is it rather the brain that supplies the senses of hearing, seeing and smelling, and do memory and opinion come to be from them, and when memory and opinion become stable, does knowledge come to be from them along these same lines? Next I considered the way in
96c which these things cease to be, and the events that affect the heaven and the earth. And in the end I myself came to think that I was uniquely unqualified for this inquiry.

'I'll give you ample evidence for this: I was so utterly blinded by that inquiry with regard to the very things that, at least as I and others supposed, I had previously known clearly that I unlearned those very things that earlier I had thought I knew, on many subjects, but in particular why a human being grows. Because earlier I thought it obvious to everyone

that it is on account of eating and drinking. For whenever portions of 96d
flesh have been added from food to other portions of flesh, and portions of bone to portions of bone, and so too by the same principle stuff of their own kind has been added to each of the other stuffs, it is then, I thought, that that which was a small mass has gone on to become a big one; and that is how the small person comes to be large. That's what I supposed then. Reasonably enough, don't you think?'

'Yes, I do,' said Cebes.

'Then consider the following as well. I thought my belief satisfactory when a large person standing by a small one seemed to be larger because 96e
of the head itself, and so likewise when one horse was compared with another. Yes, and it seemed to me even more obvious that ten was more numerous than eight on account of there being two added to it, and that two cubits was larger than one on account of its exceeding the other because of a half.'

'But now what do you think about them?' asked Cebes.

'That I'm no doubt a long way indeed from thinking that I know the cause of any of these. I don't allow myself to say even that, when somebody adds one to one, either the one it was added to has become two,[49] or the one that was added and the one it was added to became 97a
two, on account of the addition of the first to the second. For I find it astonishing that when each of them was apart from the other, each turned out to be one, and they weren't two at that time, but when they came near each other, this supposedly became a cause of their coming to be two, namely the union that consisted in being put near each other. No, nor can I still persuade myself that if somebody divides one, this, the division, has now become a cause of its coming to be two. For then there comes to be a cause of coming to be two that is the opposite of the earlier cause. Back then, you see, it was because they were brought together into 97b
proximity with each other, and one was added to the other, but now it is because they are brought apart, and one is separated from the other. No, and I can no longer persuade myself that by using this approach I know why one comes to be, nor, in short, why anything else comes to be, or perishes, or is. Instead I throw together on impulse my own different kind of approach, and I don't adopt this one at all.

[49] Omitting the words (ἢ τὸ προστεθέν) suggested at 96e9 by D. Wyttenbach, *Platonis Phaedon* (Leiden 1810 and Leipzig 1825). These words raise a further possibility: 'the one that was added' has become two.

'However, one day I heard somebody reading from what he said was a
97c book by Anaxagoras, and saying that it turns out to be intelligence that both orders things and is cause of everything. I was pleased with this cause, and it struck me that in a way it is good that intelligence should be cause of everything, and I supposed that, if this is the case, when intelligence is doing the ordering it orders everything and assigns each thing in whatever way is best. So, I thought, should someone want to discover the cause of how each thing comes to be, perishes, or is, this is
97d what he must find out about it: how it is best for it either to be, or to act or be acted upon in any other respect whatsoever. What is more, on this theory a human being should consider nothing other than what is optimal or best, concerning both that thing itself and everything else. The same person is bound to know the worse too, for it is the same knowledge that concerns them both. So by reasoning like this I thought to my delight that I had found in Anaxagoras a teacher of the cause of things who fitted my own intelligence. I supposed that he would tell me first whether the
97e earth was flat or round, and, when he had done so, would also explain the cause that necessitated it, saying what was better – better, that is, that the earth should be like this. And if he said that it was in the centre,
98a he would also explain, I thought, that it was better that it should be in the centre. If he showed me these things, I was ready to stop wishing for any other kind of cause. In particular, I was equally ready to learn about the sun in that way, and about the moon and the other celestial bodies, about their relative speed and turnings and the other things they underwent, namely how it is better that each of them should both act and be acted upon as it is. For given his claim that they have been ordered by intelligence, I never thought that he would introduce a cause for them
98b other than its being best that they should be as they are. So I supposed that when he assigned the cause to each of them and in common to them all, he would also explain what was best for each, and the good common to them all. And I wouldn't have signed away my hopes for a large sum, but I got hold of his books with real excitement and started reading them as quickly as I could, so that I might know as quickly as possible what was best and what was worse.

'But then, my friend, I was swept away from my marvellous expectations, for as I went on reading it I saw the man making no use of his
98c intelligence and not laying any causes at its door with regard to ordering things, but assigning the causality to air, aether, water and the like, as

well as many other oddities. And I came to think that what had happened to him was exactly as if someone said that it is because of intelligence that Socrates does everything that he does, but then, when he undertook to give the causes of each of my actions, were to say, first, that the cause of my now sitting here is because my body is composed of bones and sinews, and whereas the bones are rigid and have joints separating them from each other, the sinews can tauten and relax, and they surround the bones, together with the bits of flesh and the skin that keeps them together. Now while the bones are supported in their sockets, the sinews loosen and tauten and so, presumably, enable me to bend my limbs now, and on account of that cause I'm bent here in the sitting position. Next he'd give other such causes with regard to my conversing with you, assigning the causality to voices, airs and ears, and to countless other such things, and would have neglected to give the real causes, namely that, since the Athenians have decided that it was better to condemn me, on account of that I too have also decided that it is better to sit here, and more just to stay put and suffer whatever punishment they decree. For by the Dog, I think these sinews and bones would long have been in Megara or Boeotia, transported by an opinion as to what is best, if I didn't think it more just and honourable to suffer whatever punishment the city imposes, rather than to escape and run away. 98d 98e 99a

'Now calling such things *causes* is extremely odd. But if someone said that without having such things – bones, sinews and whatever else I have – I wouldn't be able to do what I have decided, he'd be telling the truth. However, saying that it is on account of them that I do what I do, rather than because of my choice of what is best, despite the fact that I act because of intelligence – that would be a profoundly careless way to talk. Imagine not being able to make the distinction that the real cause is one thing, while that without which the cause could never be a cause is something else! That is just what most people seem to me to call a cause, fumbling in the dark, as it were, and using a name that belongs to something else. That is why one individual puts a vortex around the earth and thus makes the earth actually be kept stationary by the heaven, while another compares it to a flat kneading-trough and props it up with air. But as for these things' ability to be positioned now in the best possible way for them to be placed, they neither seek it nor suppose that it has any divine might; instead they believe that one day they might find an 99b 99c

Atlas[50] that is mightier and more immortal and keeps everything together more than this one does, and they do not suppose for a moment that what is good and binding truly does bind and keep anything together.

'Now I would gladly become anyone's pupil to learn just what the truth is about that sort of cause. But since I was denied it and haven't been able
99d either to find it myself or to learn it from someone else, would you like me to give you a demonstration, Cebes, of how I've pursued my second voyage in search of the cause?'

'I'd like that enormously,' he said.

'Well then,' said Socrates, 'I decided after that, when I'd given up looking into things, that I must make sure I didn't suffer the fate of those who view and study the sun in an eclipse. For some of them ruin their
99e eyes, I believe, if they don't study its image in water or something of the kind. I too had that sort of thought, and I started to worry that I might be utterly blinded in my soul through observing things with my eyes and seeking to get hold of them with each of my senses. So I decided that I should take refuge in theories and arguments[51] and look into the truth
100a of things in them. Now maybe in a way it does not resemble what I'm comparing it to. For I don't at all accept that someone who, when studying things, does so in theories and arguments, is looking into them in images any more than someone who does so in facts. In any case, that is how I started out: on every occasion I hypothesize whatever theory I deem most robust, and then I set down as true whatever I think harmonizes with it – both about cause and about everything else – and as false whatever doesn't. I want, though, to tell you more clearly what I'm talking about. I think that at the moment you don't understand.'

'Indeed I don't' said Cebes, 'not altogether.'

100b 'This is what I'm talking about,' he said, 'nothing new, but what I've never stopped talking about, on any other occasion or in particular in the argument thus far. Well, I'll set about giving you a demonstration of the sort of cause which I've pursued. I'll go back to those things that have been our frequent refrain, and start from them, first hypothesizing that there are such things as a Beautiful alone by itself, and a Good, a Large and all the rest. If you grant me these and accept that they exist, I

[50] The fallen Titan Atlas, in Greek myth condemned to holding the heaven aloft, here symbolizes the force that keeps both earth and heaven in their places.

[51] Here and in 100a 'theories and arguments' translates one Greek word (*logoi*) which can have either meaning. The singular (*logos*) is translated 'theory' in 100a.

hope to use them to demonstrate to you the cause,[52] and to discover that the soul is immortal.'

'Yes, I do grant you that,' said Cebes, 'so proceed as quickly as you 100c
can.'

'Then consider,' he said, 'if the next point seems to you as it does to me. It appears to me that if anything is beautiful other than the Beautiful itself, it is beautiful on account of nothing other than its having a share of *that* Beautiful. And that is what I say about them all. Do you accept that sort of cause?'

'I do,' he said.

'Well then,' he said, 'I no longer understand those other wise causes, and I can't recognise them either. Suppose someone tells me why some- 100d
thing or other is beautiful, and says that it is because it has a vivid colour or shape, or some other such thing. I ignore those other explanations, because I am confused when they are all around me, and I keep the following at my side, in my straightforward, amateurish and perhaps simple-minded way: nothing makes it beautiful other than that Beautiful's presence, or association, or whatever its mode and means of accruing may be.*[53] For I don't go so far as to insist on this, but only that it is because of the beautiful that all beautiful things are beautiful. For I think that it is safest to give this reply both to myself and to another, and I 100e
believe that if I cling to this I could never fall, but that it is safe to reply both to myself and to anyone else that it is because of the beautiful that beautiful things come to be beautiful. Don't you think so too?'

'I do.'

'In that case, is it also because of largeness that large things come to be large and larger things larger, and because of smallness that smaller things come to be smaller?'

'Yes.'

'So you too wouldn't agree if someone said that one person was larger than another because of his head,[54] and the smaller one smaller because 101a
of the same thing. Instead you'd fervently declare that you yourself say simply that everything larger than something else is larger because of nothing other than largeness, and that it is on account of largeness that

[52] That is, the cause of such phenomena as those mentioned in 96b–97b.

*[53] Reading προσγενομένου (100d6) with C. Rowe, *Plato: Phaedo* (Cambridge, 1993).

[54] The causal expression translated 'because of a head' also means 'by a head', expressing the margin of difference.

the thing is larger, whereas what is smaller is smaller because of nothing other than smallness, and it is on account of smallness that the thing is smaller. For I suppose that, if you say that it is because of the head that someone is larger and someone smaller, you would be afraid of being met with a counter-argument: first that it is because of the same thing that the larger is larger and the smaller smaller, and secondly that, even though the head is small, the larger person is larger because of it, and that this
101b would be bizarre, somebody's being large because of something small. Or wouldn't you have those fears?'

Cebes laughed at that, and said: 'Yes, I would.'

'So,' he said, 'would you be afraid to say that ten is more numerous than eight because of two, and that it exceeds eight on account of this cause, rather than because of and on account of numerousness? And that two cubits is larger than one cubit because of a half, rather than because of largeness? For surely there would be the same fear.'

'Certainly,' he said.

101c 'Next, if one were added to one, wouldn't you make sure not to say that the addition was the cause of coming to be two, or that the division was the cause if it were divided? You'd loudly exclaim that you don't know any other way of each thing coming to be except by getting a share of the distinctive being of each thing in which it gets a share; that in these cases you have no cause of coming to be two other than getting a share of twoness; that those things that are going to be two must have a share of this; and that whatever is going to be one must have a share of oneness. But as for those divisions and additions and the other such ingenuities, you'd ignore them and leave them for those wiser than yourself to answer
101d with. But you for your part would, as the saying goes, be scared of your own shadow and inexperience, and you'd cling to that safe part of the hypothesis, and answer accordingly.

'But if someone were to cling to the hypothesis itself, you would ignore him and not answer until you had managed to consider its consequences and see whether or not you found them harmonizing with each other. When, however, you had to give an account of that hypothesis itself, you would do so in the same way, first giving again as another hypothesis whichever higher one seemed best, until you came to something sufficient.
101e But you wouldn't throw together what you were saying all at once, would you, like those who practise disputation, by holding a conversation about both the starting-point and its consequences, at least if you wanted to

discover something real? For those other people undoubtedly give that not a single word, and not a single thought either, because, thanks to their wisdom, they are able to mix everything together and still be pleased with themselves. But as for you, if you're one of those who love wisdom, you would, I think, do as I am saying.' 102a

'That's very true,' said Simmias and Cebes together.

ECHECRATES: Indeed, Phaedo, and reasonably so. For I think he put that wonderfully lucidly, even for someone with little intelligence.

PHAEDO: Quite so, Echecrates, and everyone there thought so.

ECHECRATES: Yes, and so do we, who weren't there but are hearing it now. Anyway, what was said after that?

PHAEDO: When these points of his were accepted and it was agreed 102b that each of the Forms exists and that other things receive a share of and are named after the Forms themselves, I think that he next asked: 'So if that's what you are saying, whenever you say that Simmias is larger than Socrates, but smaller than Phaedo, don't you mean that at that time both of these, both largeness and smallness, are in Simmias?'

'Yes, I do.'

'However,' he said, 'do you agree that the truth about "Simmias exceeds Socrates" is not as expressed in these words? For presumably it isn't in 102c Simmias' nature to exceed because of being Simmias, but rather because of the largeness that he happens to have. And do you agree that, again, he does not exceed Socrates because Socrates is Socrates, but because Socrates has smallness relative to his largeness?'

'True.'

'Right, and again that he is not exceeded by Phaedo because Phaedo is Phaedo, but because Phaedo has largeness relative to Simmias' smallness?'

'That's so.'

'In that case, this is how Simmias is labelled both small and large, by being in between the pair of them, offering his smallness to Phaedo's 102d largeness to be exceeded, but providing to Socrates his largeness, which exceeds Socrates' smallness.' He smiled as he said this, and then added: 'I seem to be on the point of talking just like a textbook, but anyway the reality is presumably as I say.'

Cebes agreed.

'Now the reason why I say this is that I want you to come to think as I do. For it seems to me not only that Largeness itself is never willing to be large and small at the same time, but also that the largeness in us never

admits the small, and is not willing to be exceeded, but must do one of two
102e things, either flee and retreat when its opposite, the small, is approaching it, or perish when that opposite has approached. It is not willing to stand its ground by admitting smallness and so be different from what it was. I myself, for example, do admit and withstand smallness and, while still being this same man who I am, am small; but that thing is large and does not have the nerve to be small. In the same way, the small in us is never willing to come to be, or be, large, nor can any other opposite still be what
103a it was and at the same time come to be, and be, its opposite, but it either departs or perishes when this happens to it.'

'That's exactly how it seems to me,' said Cebes.

When one of those present heard this (I don't clearly remember who it was), he said: 'Heavens, in your earlier arguments didn't you accept the very opposite of what is now being said, that the larger comes to be from the smaller, and the smaller from the larger, and that the coming-to-be of opposites is simply this – from their opposites? But now I think it is being said that this could never happen.'

103b Socrates inclined his head and listened, and then said: 'Manfully recalled, but you're not noticing the difference between what is being said now and what was said then. Back then, you see, it was said that opposite thing comes to be from opposite thing, whereas now it is being said that the opposite by itself could never come to be its own opposite, neither the opposite in us nor the opposite in nature. Because then, my friend, we were talking about the things that have the opposites, naming them after those opposites, whereas now we're talking about those opposites themselves, from whose presence inside them the things that
103c are named get their labels. We are saying that the opposites themselves would never be willing to admit coming to be one another.' As he said this he looked towards Cebes and said: 'Cebes, surely you too weren't disturbed by any of what he said?'

'No,' said Cebes, 'I'm not back in that state. All the same, I don't for a moment say that there aren't many things that do disturb me.'

'In that case,' he said, 'between us we've agreed straightforwardly that the opposite will never be its own opposite.'

'Quite right,' said Cebes.

'I'd like you to go on to consider the following too,' he said, 'and see if it turns out that you agree with me. Do you call something "hot", and something "cold"?'

'Yes, I do.'

'Are they just what you call "snow" and "fire"?'

'Certainly not.' 103d

'Rather, you call the hot something different from fire, and the cold something different from snow?'

'Yes.'

'But you do believe this much, I think, that while it is snow it will never admit the hot, in the way that we were discussing earlier, and continue to be just what it was, snow, as well as something hot, but when the hot is approaching it will either retreat from the hot or perish.'

'Certainly.'

'Yes, and again when the cold is approaching fire, the fire will either withdraw or perish, but it will never have the nerve to admit the coldness and continue to be just what it was, fire, as well as cold.'

'That's true,' he said. 103e

'So is it true,' he said, 'concerning some things of this sort, that not only does the Form itself merit its own name for all time, but there is also something else that merits it, which is not the same as the Form, but which, whenever it exists, always has the feature of that Form. Maybe what I mean will be clearer still in the following case: presumably the odd must always be given this name that we are now uttering, mustn't it?'

'Certainly.'

'Is it the only thing of which that is true – this is my question – or is there also something else, which is not just what the odd is, but all 104a the same must always be called "odd" too, together with its own name, because its nature is such that it is never deprived of the odd? By this I mean, for example, the state in which threeness is, and many other things too. Consider the case of threeness. Don't you think that threeness should always be called both by its own name and by the name of the odd? The odd is not just what threeness is, but nevertheless threeness, fiveness, and an entire half of the number series are somehow naturally such that 104b each of them is always odd, despite not being just what the odd is. Again, the two, the four and in its turn the entire other column of the number series are each always even, despite not being just what the even is. Do you accept that or not?'

'Of course I do,' he said.

'Well then,' he said, 'take a look at the point I want to make clear. It's the following: not only do those opposites evidently not admit one

another, but there are also all those things that are not opposites of one another, but always possess the opposites, and they too seem not to admit whatever form is opposed to the form inside them; instead, when it
104c attacks, evidently they either perish or retreat. Or won't we say that the three will either perish or let anything else happen to it, before it puts up with coming to be even, while still being three?'

'Quite so,' said Cebes.

'And of course twoness isn't the *opposite* of threeness,' he said.

'No, certainly not.'

'In that case, not only do the opposite forms not withstand the attack of one another, but there are also some other things that do not withstand the attack of the opposites.'

'That's very true,' he said.

'So' he said, 'do you want us, if we can, to determine what sort of thing they are?'

'Certainly.'

104d 'Now, Cebes,' he said, 'would they be the following: those that, whatever they occupy, compel it not only to have their own form in each case, but also, invariably, the form of some *opposite* of something as well?'[55]

'What do you mean?'

'Just what we were saying a moment ago. For presumably you know that whatever the form of the three occupies, must not only be three but also be odd.'

'Certainly.'

'So, we're saying, the form that is the opposite of whatever feature makes it so would never impose itself upon something like that.'

'No, it wouldn't.'

'Right, and we found that the form of odd makes it so?'

'Yes.'

'And is the form of the even its opposite?'

'Yes.'

104e 'In that case, the form of the even will never impose itself upon three.'

'No, certainly not.'

'So three has no share of the even.'

[55] The construal of this sentence is much debated. That the sense should be more or less as indicated in the translation is confirmed by the paraphrase at 104d; whether the printed Greek text can, without emendation, bear that meaning is less than certain.

'No, no share.'

'In that case, threeness is un-even.'

'Yes.'

'So as regards what I was saying we should determine, namely the sort of things that are not the opposites of something but still do not admit that opposite – such as our present example, threeness, which is not the opposite of the even but all the same does not admit the even, because it always imports the opposite of the even, as twoness imports the opposite of the odd and the fire that of the cold, and as a great many 105a other things do – anyway, see if you make the determination as follows. Not only does the opposite not admit its opposite, but there is also the thing that imports some opposite to whatever it itself attacks, and this further thing, the one that imports it, never admits the opposite of what is imported. But recollect it once again, for there's no harm in hearing it many times. Five will never admit the form of the even, nor will ten, its double, admit the form of the odd. Now the double is also the opposite of something *else*, but it still will not admit the form of the odd. Nor then 105b will one-and-a-half, nor the others like it either – the half, and next the third and all the others of the kind – admit the form of the whole, if, that is, you follow and agree that it is so.'

'Yes, I entirely agree, and entirely follow,' he said.

'Then tell me again from the start,' he said. 'And don't give as your answer whatever I say in my question, but follow my example. I say this because, besides that safe answer I gave at first, I see another kind of safety, thanks to what we are saying now. For if you were to ask me what it is that, when it comes to be present in anything's body, makes the thing hot, I will not give that safe, ignorant answer – namely that it is hotness – 105c but, thanks to what we now say, a more ingenious one: that it is fire. And if you ask what it is that, when it comes to be present in any body, makes the body ill, I will not say that it is illness, but that it is fever. And if asked what it is that, when it comes to be present in any number, makes the number odd, I will not say that it is oddness, but that it is oneness, and so on for the rest. Well, see if you now understand well enough what I want.'

'Yes, quite well enough,' said Cebes.

'So answer,' said Socrates. 'What is it that, when it comes to be present in any body, makes the body alive?'

'It is soul,' he said.

105d 'Now is this always the case?'

'Yes, of course,' he said.

'In that case, whenever soul occupies anything, does soul always come to it bringing life?'

'Yes, it does.'

'Does life have an opposite or not?'

'It does,' he said.

'What?'

'Death.'

'So will soul *never* admit the opposite of what it itself always imports, as has been agreed from what was said earlier?'

'Very much so,' said Cebes.

'Very well. What were we just now calling that which does not admit the form of the even?'

'Un-even,' he said.

'What about that which does not admit the just, and whatever does not admit musical?'

105e 'Un-musical,' he said, 'and the former un-just.'

'Very well. What do we call anything that does not admit death?'

'Immortal,'[56] he said.

'Now soul does not admit death, does it?'

'No.'

'In that case, soul is immortal.'

'Yes, immortal.'

'Very well,' he said. 'Should we say that this has been proved? What do you think?'

'Yes, and most sufficiently, Socrates.'

'Well then, Cebes,' he said. 'If the un-even were necessarily
106a imperishable, three would surely be imperishable, wouldn't it?'

'Yes, of course.'

'Now if the un-hot too were necessarily imperishable, then when someone brought hot to snow, would the snow withdraw intact and unmelted? For it wouldn't *perish*, at least, nor again would it stand its ground and admit the hotness.'

'That's true,' he said.

[56] Greek *athanatos*, 'im-mortal' or 'deathless', is morphologically like the modal formation Socrates has more or less invented immediately above, where 'un-F' means 'incapable of being F'. In the case of 'immortal' the word did indeed already carry that modal sense.

'So too in the same way, I suppose, if the un-cold were imperishable, then when something cold came to fire, the fire would never be extinguished, nor would it perish, but it would depart intact and be gone.'

'Necessarily.'

'Now is it necessary to talk in the following way about the immortal as well? If the immortal is imperishable too, then it is impossible for soul to perish whenever death comes to it. Because, given what was said before, it won't admit death or be dead, just as three won't be even, as we were saying, nor again will the odd, and fire won't be cold, nor will the hotness in the fire. "But," someone might say, "why shouldn't it be that, although the odd does not become even when the even comes to it, as was agreed, the odd perishes, and the even comes to be in place of it?" Now against someone who said this, we'd have no way of defending the claim that it does not perish, since the uneven is not imperishable. For if we'd secured agreement to that, it would be easy for us to defend the claim that when the even comes to them the odd and three depart and are gone. And that is how we'd defend claims about fire, hot and the rest, isn't it?' 106b 106c

'Certainly.'

'So too in the present case, that of the immortal, if we secure agreement that it is imperishable too, then soul would be imperishable as well as being immortal. Otherwise we'd need some other argument.' 106d

'But there's no need,' he said, 'at least on that account. For there would hardly be anything else that does not admit destruction, if the immortal, despite being everlasting, will admit destruction.'

'Yes,' said Socrates, 'and as for god, I suppose, and the Form of Life itself, and any other immortal thing there may be, it would be agreed by everyone that they never perish.'

'Indeed,' he said, 'by all people, certainly, and even more so, I imagine, by gods.'

'So because the immortal is also indestructible, surely soul, if it really is immortal, would also be imperishable, wouldn't it?' 106e

'It absolutely must.'

'In that case, when death attacks the human being, the mortal part of him dies, it seems, whereas the immortal part departs intact and undestroyed, and is gone, having retreated from death.'

'So it appears.'

'And so,' he said, 'more surely than anything, Cebes, soul is immortal
107a and imperishable, and our souls really will exist in Hades.'

'For my part, Socrates,' he said, 'I've nothing else to say against this, nor can I doubt the arguments in any way. If, however, Simmias here or someone else has anything to say, it's as well not to keep silent. For if someone wants to say or hear anything on the subject, I don't know of any other occasion than the present one to which he could defer it.'

'Well,' said Simmias, 'on the strength of what has been said I too no longer have any room for doubt. All the same, because of the magnitude
107b of the issues discussed in our arguments, and because of my low regard for human weakness, I'm compelled still to keep some doubt in my mind about what has been said.'

'Yes, not only that, Simmias,' said Socrates, 'but you're right to say so, and, besides, even if you all[57] find the first hypotheses trustworthy, nonetheless you should consider them more clearly. And if you analyze them well enough, you'll follow the argument, I imagine, as far as a human being can follow it up. Should this itself become clear, then you won't seek anything further.'

'That's true,' he said.

107c 'But, gentlemen,' he said, 'it is right to think *this* much: that if the soul actually is immortal, then it needs to be cared for, not only for the sake of the time in which what we call "living" goes on, but for the sake of all time; and that now the dangers of neglecting the soul really would seem to be dreadful. For if death were separation from everything, it would be a godsend for wicked people to die, and thus be separated both from the body and at the same time, by also losing their soul, from their own vice. As it is, however, since the soul is evidently immortal, it could have no
107d means of safety or of escaping evils, other than becoming both as good and as wise as possible. For the soul comes to Hades with nothing other than its education and its way of life, which are said to confer the very greatest benefit or harm upon one who has died, as soon as his journey there starts. And what is said goes as follows.

'When each person has met his end, his guardian spirit, to whom he was allotted when alive, undertakes to bring him to a certain place, where the
107e assembled individuals must present themselves in court, and then travel

[57] Here and in the rest of the paragraph Socrates addresses not only Simmias but also the others present, using the second person plural; the translation 'you all' is used to reflect this.

to Hades with that guide who has been appointed to take them on their journey there. Once there, they are given what they should be given, and stay for however long is needed, and then another guide escorts them back here again, after many long cycles of time. So it turns out that the journey is not as Aeschylus' Telephus says. He says that a straightforward "path" 108a
leads to Hades, whereas it seems to me to be neither straightforward nor single. For then there would have been no need for guides, because surely nobody would have gone astray in any direction if the road were a single one. In fact, however, it looks as if the path has many divisions and forks – I say so on the evidence of the sacrifices and customs in our world.

'Now the composed and wise soul follows its guide and is not unaware of what is going on around it. But the soul that is desirous of the body, as I said before,[58] is in a flutter for a long time about the body and about 108b
the visible region, resists much and suffers much, and is led away by the appointed spirit only by force and with difficulty. On arrival at the place where the other souls are, a soul that is impure and has performed an impure act, by engaging in unjust killings or perpetrating other deeds which are akin to these and characteristic of kindred souls, is shunned by everyone else: everyone turns away from it, and is unwilling to become either its companion or its guide. The soul wanders alone, in the grip of every deprivation, until certain lengths of time have elapsed, and, when 108c
they have gone by, it is by necessity borne into the dwelling suitable for it. On the other hand, each soul that has passed through its life both purely and decently receives gods as companions and as guides alike, and then dwells in the region appropriate to it. Now there are many wondrous regions of the earth, and the earth itself is neither of the nature nor of the size it is believed to be by those who usually talk about it, as I have been convinced by someone.'

To which Simmias said: 'What do you mean by this, Socrates? I too, 108d
you see, have heard a good deal about the earth, but not the things that convince you. So I'd enjoy hearing about them.'

'Yes, well, Simmias, I don't think that describing what they are, at any rate, requires the skill of Glaucus.[59] But showing that they are *true* seems

[58] At 81b–d.

[59] This may be (a) the Glaucus who contrived an ingenious musical instrument out of four discs, which when struck in unison produced a harmony; (b) Glaucus of Chios, the inventor of welding (Herodotus 1.25); or (c) the Glaucus who possessed some marvellous art, perhaps prophecy, but was lost at sea and became a sea-god, encrusted with barnacles (cf. *Republic* 611c–d). See further, Diskin Clay, 'The art of Glaukos', *American Journal of Philology* 106 (1985), 230–6.

to me to be too difficult for Glaucus' skill. For one thing, I might not even be able to do so myself, and, for another, even if I did have the knowledge, I think that the life left to me, Simmias, isn't enough for the length of the discussion. All the same, there's nothing to stop me from saying what sort
108e of form I've been convinced the earth has, and describing its regions.'

'Well,' said Simmias, 'even that is enough.'

'Very well,' he said. 'I've been convinced, first, that, if the earth is
109a round and in the middle of the heaven, it has no need of air or of any other such necessity to stop it falling, but the uniformity of the heaven on every side and the equilibrium of the earth itself are enough to hold it in place. The reason is that, if a thing in equilibrium is put in the middle of something uniform, it will not be able to lean more or less in any direction, but in its uniform state it will stay in place without leaning. Well then,' he said, 'that is the first thing of which I have been convinced.'

'And rightly so,' said Simmias.

'The next thing, then,' he said, 'is that the earth is extremely large, and
109b that we who live from the Phasis up to the pillars of Heracles dwell in a small part of it, dwelling around the sea like ants or frogs around a pond, while many other people dwell elsewhere in many regions of the same kind. For all over the earth there are many hollows of every different shape and size, into which water, mist and air have flowed together. The earth itself, however, is pure and is set in the pure heaven in which the celestial
109c bodies are, the very heaven which most of those who concern themselves with such things[*60] call "aether". Water, mist and air are sediments of aether, and they are always flowing together into the hollows of the earth.

'Now we are unaware that we dwell in the earth's hollows, and we suppose that we dwell up on the earth's surface, just as if someone who dwelt in the middle of the seabed were to suppose that he dwelt on the sea's surface, and, when he saw the sun and the other celestial bodies through the water, were to believe that the sea was the heaven, and because of
109d his slowness and weakness had never yet reached the top of the sea, and had not emerged and raised his head out of the sea into the region here, and then seen how much purer and more beautiful it really is than the region where his kind are, and had not been told by anyone else who had seen it. That is just the condition we too are in; for we dwell in a certain

[*60] Deleting εἰωθότων λέγειν (109c2), which, as Burnet, *Plato's Phaedo*, argues, seems to have been inserted from 108c7.

hollow of the earth and suppose that we dwell upon its surface, and we call the air "heaven", as if it were the heaven and the celestial bodies moved through it. But in actual fact the same thing happens: because of our weakness and slowness we cannot go all the way to the edge of the 109e
air. For if someone were to come to the top of the air, or get wings and fly up there, he would stick his head through and behold the sight: just as in this region fish see the things here if they stick their heads up out of the sea, someone would likewise behold the sight of the things there, and if his nature were good enough to endure viewing them, he would perceive that *that* is the true heaven, the genuine light and the veritable earth. For 110a
this earth of ours, its stones and the whole region here are damaged and eaten away, as the things in the sea have been by the brine. Nothing worth mentioning grows in the sea, and there is virtually nothing flawless there, but wherever there actually is earth, there are broken rocks, sand, and an unimaginable amount of filth and mud, and things that are not at all worth comparing with the beauties around us. But those other beauties, in turn, would appear to excel the ones around us much more still. For if it's also appropriate to tell a myth, it's worth hearing, Simmias, what the 110b
things on the surface of the earth under the heaven are really like.'

'Well, Socrates' said Simmias, 'we would enjoy hearing this myth.'

'Very well, my friend,' he said. 'It is said first that the earth itself, if one could view it from above, would appear to the eye like one of those balls of twelve leather pieces: varied, and interspersed with colours, of which the colours here are like samples, the ones that painters use. There, 110c
however, the entire earth is of such colours, and of colours much brighter and purer still than these. For part of the earth is purple and astonishingly beautiful, part of it is golden, all its white part is whiter than chalk or snow, and the earth is composed of the other colours in the same way, and of colours more numerous and beautiful still than all those which we ourselves have seen. For these hollows of the earth are completely full of water and air, and thus themselves display a pattern of colour 110d
as they gleam amid the intricate variety of other colours. The result is that the impression given of the earth is of a single continuous intricate pattern. Given that the earth is like that, the things that grow on it do so in matching style – trees and flowers and their fruits. And likewise the mountains and stones, for their part, have their smoothness, transparency and colours proportionately more beautiful. Moreover, those gems that are treasured here, sardian stones, jaspers, emeralds and everything of

110e the kind, are fragments of them. But there everything is like that, and more beautiful still than our gems. The cause of this is that those stones are pure, not eaten up and not damaged either, as the stones in our region have been by decomposition and brine thanks to the deposits which have accumulated here, and which bring about deformities and illnesses in stones, in earth, and in animals and plants too. The earth itself, however, 111a is decorated with all these, and besides with gold, silver and the other such metals. For they are by nature openly in sight, and they are many in number, large, and all over the earth. As a result, seeing the earth is a vision to make the viewer happy.

'On its surface there are animals of many kinds, including human beings, some of them dwelling inland, others dwelling around the air as we do around the sea, and yet others on islands which lie beside the mainland with air flowing around them. In short, the function served for 111b us by water and sea is served for them by air, and the function served for us by air is served for them by aether. Their seasons are balanced in such a way that they are free of illness and live for a much longer time than the people here; and in sight, hearing, wisdom, and all such things they exceed us in the same degree as air exceeds water in purity and aether air. Above all, they have groves and shrines of the gods, in which gods really are dwellers, and they have utterances, prophecies and sightings 111c of the gods, events which also occur in face-to-face meetings with them. Furthermore, the sun and moon and celestial bodies are seen by them as they really are, and their happiness in other ways too is in keeping with all this.

'Now the earth as a whole and the things surrounding the earth are of this nature. But there are regions in it, wherever it is hollowed, many of them around the whole earth in a ring, some of which are deeper and more gaping than the region in which we dwell, while others are deeper 111d but have a smaller mouth than the region around us, and there are others both shallower in depth and wider than the region here. All these regions open into each other underground by many routes, both narrower and wider, and have outlets running through them, by which a great amount of water flows back and forth between them, as if into mixing bowls. Beneath the earth there are unimaginably large ever-flowing rivers of both hot and cold waters, and a great amount of fire and large rivers of 111e fire, and many rivers of liquid mud, both of purer mud and of a more filthy sort, just as in Sicily there are rivers of mud flowing ahead of the

lava and there is the lava itself. The regions are each filled with these, in whatever way the circuit happens to come to each of them each time. All these things are moved back and forth as if by a sort of oscillation inside the earth. And apparently this oscillation exists on account of a natural arrangement of the following kind.

'One of the chasms in the earth is in fact the largest in a number of ways, but in particular because it is bored right through the whole earth. 112a This is the one Homer mentioned,[61] when he described it as:

> A long way away, where there is the deepest pit under the earth.

'Elsewhere both Homer[62] and many other poets have called it Tartarus. All the rivers flow together into this chasm and flow out of it again. And each river comes to be like the kind of earth through which it flows. The 112b cause of all the streams flowing out from here, and flowing inside, is that this liquid has no base and no foundation. So it oscillates and surges back and forth, and the air and the wind around the liquid do the same. For they follow along with the liquid, both when it rushes towards the other side of the earth and when it rushes towards our side. Just as, when animals breathe, their breath is exhaled and inhaled in an unbroken flow, so too there the wind[63] oscillates with the liquid and brings about some formidable and unimaginable gales, both when the wind goes in and when it goes out.

'Now whenever the water retreats into the region that is said to be 112c "below", it flows through the earth into the places to which those streams lead, and, like people pumping, fills them. Again, whenever it empties from there and rushes back this way, it fills the streams here afresh; and when they are full they flow through the channels and through the earth, and each of them comes to the particular region into which its channel is formed, and they create seas, lakes, rivers and springs. From there they sink back down under the earth, some of them going around longer and 112d more numerous tracts, others going around fewer and shorter ones, and then they fall into Tartarus again. In some cases this is far lower than where they were pumped out, in other cases only slightly lower; but they all do flow in lower than where they flow out, and some of them flow in directly opposite the place where they came out,[*64] while others do so in

[61] *Iliad* 8.14. [62] *Iliad* 8.481.
[63] The same Greek word is used both for 'breath' and for 'wind'.
[*64] Omitting εἰσρεῖ at 112d5, with Stobaeus; see Verdenius, 'Notes on Plato's *Phaedo*'.

the same part. Now there are some that go all the way round in a circle, wound round the earth like snakes either once or even several times, and
112e then drop as far down as they can and fall back in. They can drop down in either direction as far as the middle, but no further; for the part on either side becomes steep for both the streams.

'The other streams are many, large and of every kind, and among these many streams there turn out to be four in particular, of which the one that is largest, and flows furthest outside and around in a circle, is the so-called Ocean. Directly opposite it, flowing in the opposite direction, is
113a Acheron, which flows through various barren regions, and in particular flows underground to reach the Acherusian lake. There the souls of most of those who have died come and stay for certain ordained times, longer in some cases, shorter in others, and then are sent away to be born as living creatures. A third river disgorges in the middle of these two and, close to its mouth, it comes out into a large region that is ablaze with a great amount of fire, and forms a lake larger than our sea, a lake bubbling
113b up with water and mud. From here it moves, squalid and muddy, in a circle, and, winding around inside the earth, comes to various places, including the edge of the Acherusian lake, though it does not mix with its water. After winding round many times underground, it falls into a lower part of Tartarus. This is the one they name "Pyriphlegethon", and scraps of it are blown out by the torrents of lava in various places on the earth. The fourth river comes out opposite it, initially into a
113c region that is frighteningly desolate, it is said, and a deep black colour all over. This is the region[*65] that they name "Stygian", and the river falls into and forms the lake "Styx".[*66] The river comes in here and receives formidable powers in the water, then it sinks under the earth and, as it winds round, moves in the opposite direction to the Pyriphlegethon and meets it in the Acherusian lake from the opposite side. Its water too does not mix with any other, but it likewise goes round in a circle and then falls into Tartarus opposite the Pyriphlegethon. Its name, the poets say, is Cocytus.

113d 'This then is the nature of the rivers. When the dead arrive, each in the region to which the spirit escorts it, they first present themselves in court, both those who lived nobly and piously and those who did not.

[*65] Reading ὃν δή rather than ὃ δή at 113c1.
[*66] Omitting ἥν at 113c2, with most MSS.

Those found to have lived average lives journey to the Acheron, and step onto certain things that serve them as rafts, and then on these they enter the lake. There they dwell and, if anyone has done anything wrong, they are purified by being punished for their wrongs, and so are pardoned; and they receive honours in recognition of their good deeds, each according 113e
to his deserts. All those found to be incurable because of the gravity of their offences, who have committed either many grave sacrilegious acts, or many unjust and unlawful murders, or anything else that is of this kind, are flung by the fate they deserve into Tartarus, and never step out from there. But all those who are found guilty of curable but grave offences, for example, those who in a fit of anger acted violently to a father or mother and spent the rest of their lives regretting it, or those 114a
who became homicides in similar circumstances, must be banished to Tartarus. When they have been banished and have spent a year there, the surge throws them out, sending the homicides down the Cocytus, and the father- and mother-beaters down the Pyriphlegethon. When their journey brings them alongside the Acherusian lake, here they shout and call, some calling to those they killed, others to those they injured. When they have called to them, they beg and beseech them to let them step 114b
out into the lake, and to receive them. If they persuade them, out they step and their evils are over, but, if not, they are sent to Tartarus again, and from there back into the rivers. And this does not stop happening to them until they persuade those they wronged. For this is the punishment imposed on them by the jurors.

'But as for all those who are found to have lived exceptionally pious lives, they are the ones who are freed and separated from these regions inside the earth, as if from prisons, enter the pure dwelling above, and 114c
make their dwelling on the earth's surface. And of these, those who purified themselves sufficiently with philosophy live thereafter entirely without bodies, and enter dwellings fairer still than these, although explaining these dwellings is not easy, nor is there sufficient time in the present circumstances. Anyhow, Simmias, the things we have described are the reason why we should do everything we can to have a share of virtue and wisdom in life. For fair is the prize and great the hope.

'Now it does not befit a man of intelligence to insist that these things 114d
are as I have described them. However, since the soul turns out to be immortal, I think that for someone who believes this to be so it is both fitting and worth the risk – for fair is the risk – to insist that either what

I have said or something like it is true concerning our souls and their dwelling places. One must, so to speak, chant such things to oneself, which is why I myself have been drawing out my myth for a long time. Anyhow, these are the reasons why a man should be confident about his
114e own soul if he is one who in his life ignored the other pleasures, namely the bodily ones, and the body's adornments, as belonging to something else, because he believed that they bring about more harm than good, but pursued the pleasures of learning, and adorned his soul not with an adornment that belongs to something else, but with the soul's own
115a adornment,[67] namely temperance, justice, courage, freedom and truth, and thus awaits the journey to Hades as one who will make it whenever destiny calls. Now as for you, Simmias, Cebes and you others, you will each make the journey some time hereafter. But I am even now being called, as a man in a tragedy would say, by destiny. The hour has more or less come for me to turn to my bath; for it seems better to take a bath before drinking the poison, and so not to burden the women with the job of washing a corpse.'

115b After Socrates had said this, Crito replied: 'Very well, Socrates. But what are your instructions, to these people or to me, concerning either your children or anything else? I mean whatever would be the greatest favour we can do you.'

'Just what I always say, Crito' he said, 'and nothing particularly new. That is, that if you take care of yourselves, whatever you do will be a favour to me and mine, and to yourselves, even if you don't undertake to do so now. If on the other hand you fail to take care of yourselves, and refuse to live by following the trail set by today's conversation and our
115c previous ones, then however many firm undertakings you make now, you won't do any good.'

'Then we'll strive to do so,' he said. 'And how should we bury you?'

'However you want,' he said, 'as long as you catch me and I don't escape you.' As he said this he laughed gently and looked towards us, then said: 'Gentlemen, I'm not convincing Crito that I am Socrates here, the one who is now holding a conversation – setting out remarks one
115d by one. Instead he supposes that I'm that corpse which he'll shortly be seeing, and he actually asks how he should bury me. As for the argument I have spent a long time propounding, that when I drink the poison I

[67] The same Greek word is used both for 'adornment' and for the soul's 'composure'.

won't stay behind in your company any longer, but will depart and be gone to some happy state fit for the blessed, I seem to be wasting my breath on him, while reassuring both you and myself. So you must give surety for me to Crito,' he said, 'the opposite surety to the one Crito tried to give my jurors. For he guaranteed that I *would* stay behind, but you must give surety that I will *not* stay behind when I die, but will depart 115e
and be gone. That way Crito can bear it more readily, and, when he sees my body being either burned or buried, need not be upset on my behalf as if terrible things were happening to me, or say at the funeral that it is Socrates that he is laying out, or carrying to the tomb, or burying. For you need to understand, my excellent Crito,' he said, 'that not speaking correctly is not just a travesty of the point at issue, but also has a bad effect on people's souls. No, you should cheerfully say that you're burying my body, and you should bury it in whatever way you like and consider most 116a
in accordance with the rules.'

After saying this he stood up and went into a room to take a bath. Crito went with him, but told us to wait. So we waited, and as we did so we held a conversation amongst ourselves on the things that had been said, and considered them again; but for some of the time we spelled out how great a misfortune had befallen us, for we really thought that it was as if we were about to lose our father and spend the rest of our lives as orphans. When he had taken his bath and his children had been brought 116b
to him – he had two small sons and one older one – and those women of his household had come, he had a conversation with them in front of Crito and instructed them to do various things he wanted, and then told the women and children to leave. Then he came over to us on his own. It was already nearly sunset, as he had spent a long time inside. He came and sat down, freshly bathed, and after that there was only a brief conversation before the servant of the Eleven[68] arrived and came over to him. 'Socrates,' he said, 'I won't bring against you the charge that I 116c
bring against others, that they get angry with me and call down curses whenever I bring them the command, enforced by the authorities, that they must drink the poison. I've come to know in other ways too during this time that you're the noblest, kindest and best man ever to come here. And now in particular I'm quite sure that you aren't angry with me, for you know the people to blame, and are angry with them. So now,

[68] See n. 7 above.

116d since you know what I've come to tell you, goodbye, and try to bear the inevitable as best you can.' He promptly burst into tears, then turned and left.

Socrates looked up towards him and said: 'Goodbye to you too, and we'll do as you say.' With that he said to us: 'What a courteous person! Throughout all my time here he's been visiting, sometimes stopping for a conversation, and he's been the most likeable of men. How decent it is of him to cry for me now. But come, Crito, let us heed his words, and let someone bring the poison, if it's ready and ground. If not, the man had better grind it.'

116e To which Crito said: 'But, Socrates, I think that the sun is still on the mountains and hasn't set yet. On top of that, I know that others too drink the poison long after the command has come to them, and first have a good dinner and a good deal to drink and, what's more, some first have sex with whoever they happen to desire. But don't hurry at all – there's still time.'

Socrates then said: 'Yes, Crito, the people you mention do these things with good reason – they think that they gain from having done them, you
117a see – and I myself won't do these things, likewise with good reason. For I think I'll gain nothing from having drunk it a little later, except making myself a laughing-stock in my own eyes by clinging to life, and by being tight-fisted when there's nothing left to keep. No, come on,' he said, 'do as I say and don't refuse.'

When Crito heard that he nodded to his slave, who was standing nearby. The slave went out, and after a long time came back with the man who was going to administer the poison, who brought it ready and ground in a cup. When Socrates saw the man, he said: 'Very well, my excellent friend. You're the expert. What should I do?'

117b 'Just drink it and then walk around,' he said, 'until a heaviness comes in your legs. Then lie down, and it will take effect by itself.' With that he handed Socrates the cup.

Socrates took it very gladly indeed, Echecrates, without any fear and with no change to either his colour or his expression. Eying the man with a characteristically mischievous look, he said: 'What would you say about pouring a libation from this drink in someone's honour? Is it allowed or not?'

'We grind only as much as we think is the right amount to drink, Socrates,' he said.

'I understand,' he said. 'But it is surely both allowed and right to *pray* 117c
to the gods that the change of dwelling from here to there may be attended
by good fortune. That is what I pray, and so may it happen.'

As soon as he'd said this, he held the cup to his lips and drank it all,
utterly coolly and contentedly. So far most of us had been pretty much
able to hold back our tears, but when we saw him drinking and draining
it, we couldn't do so any longer, but at least in my case the tears came
flooding out in spite of myself, and so I covered my head and wept for
myself – not for him, you understand, but for my own fortune, that I'd 117d
lost such a friend. Already before me, Crito, when he couldn't hold back
his tears, had stood up and walked away. But Apollodorus hadn't stopped
crying for a moment even previously, and now he howled out as he wept
and lamented, and got the whole group in tears, apart from Socrates
himself.

Socrates said: 'You astonish me – what a way for you all to behave!
You realize it was not least for this reason that I sent away the women, so
that they wouldn't strike the wrong note in this sort of way. For in fact 117e
I've heard that one should meet one's end in a reverent silence. No, keep
quiet and show some resolve.'

When we heard this, we felt ashamed of ourselves and stopped crying.
But Socrates walked around, and then, when he said that his legs were
heavy, lay down on his back, as the man was telling him to do. As soon
as he did so, this man*[69] took hold of him, and after a while examined
Socrates' feet and legs, then gave his foot a hard pinch and asked if he 118a
felt it. Socrates said he didn't. Next he did the same again to Socrates'
shins, and by going up the body in this way he showed us that Socrates
was going cold and rigid. The man kept hold of him and said that, when
it reached his heart, he would then be gone.

By now it was pretty much the parts around his abdomen that were
going cold, when he uncovered his head – as it had been covered – and
said his last words: 'Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius. All[70] of you must
pay the debt and not overlook it.'

'Yes, that will be done,' said Crito. 'But see if you have something else
to say.'

*[69] Deleting ὁ δοὺς τὸ φάρμακον (117e6–7) with Verdenius, 'Notes on Plato's *Phaedo*'.

[70] 'All' is added in the translation to convey the fact that Socrates uses the second person plural, speaking to the whole group and not to Crito alone. They all share this mysterious debt, and it is for all the survivors to repay it.

To this question Socrates gave no further answer, but after a little while he moved, and the man uncovered him. His eyes went fixed. When Crito saw this, he closed the mouth and eyes.

That, Echecrates, was the end of our friend, a man who was, as we would say, the best of those whom we came to know in those days, and also the wisest and most just.